



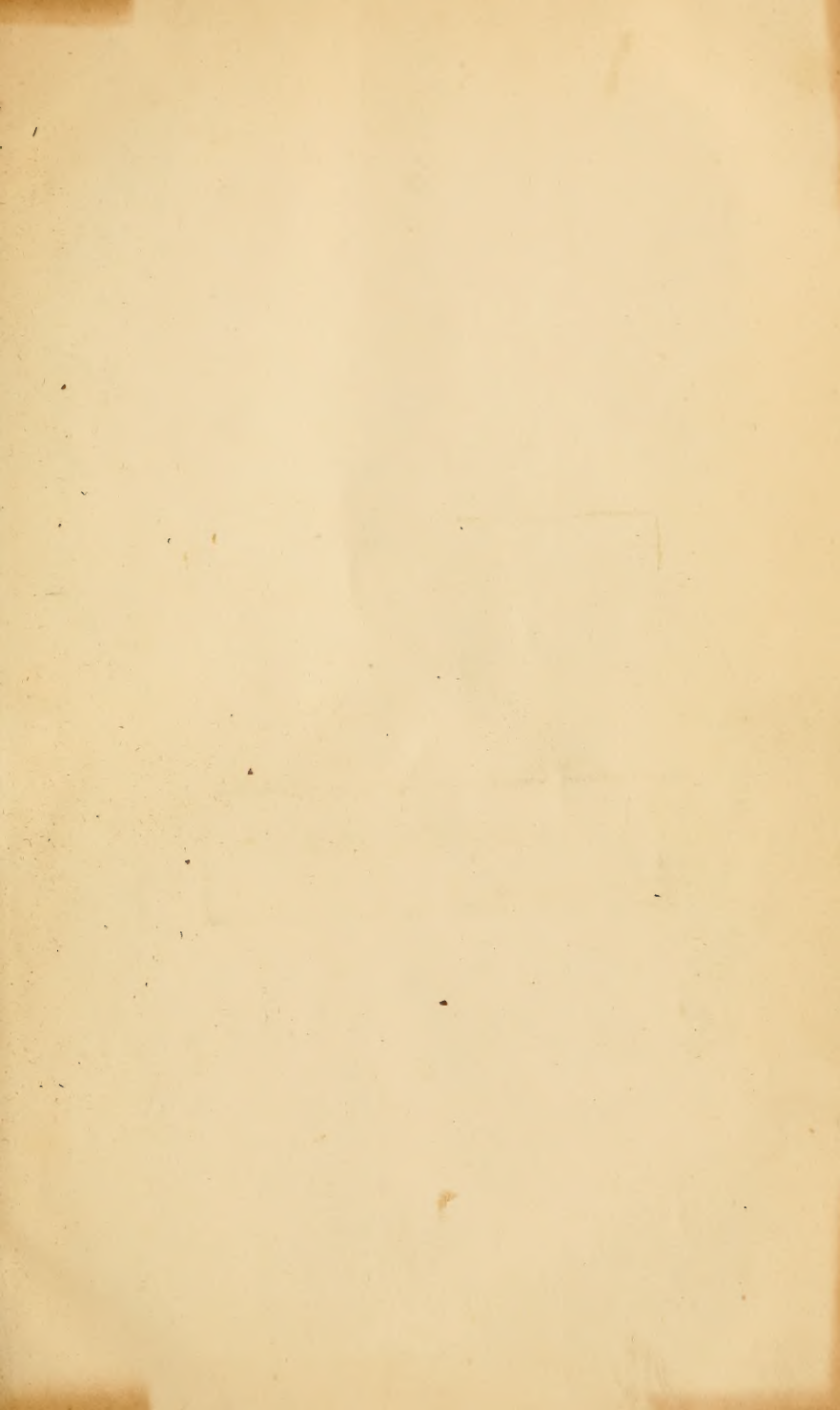
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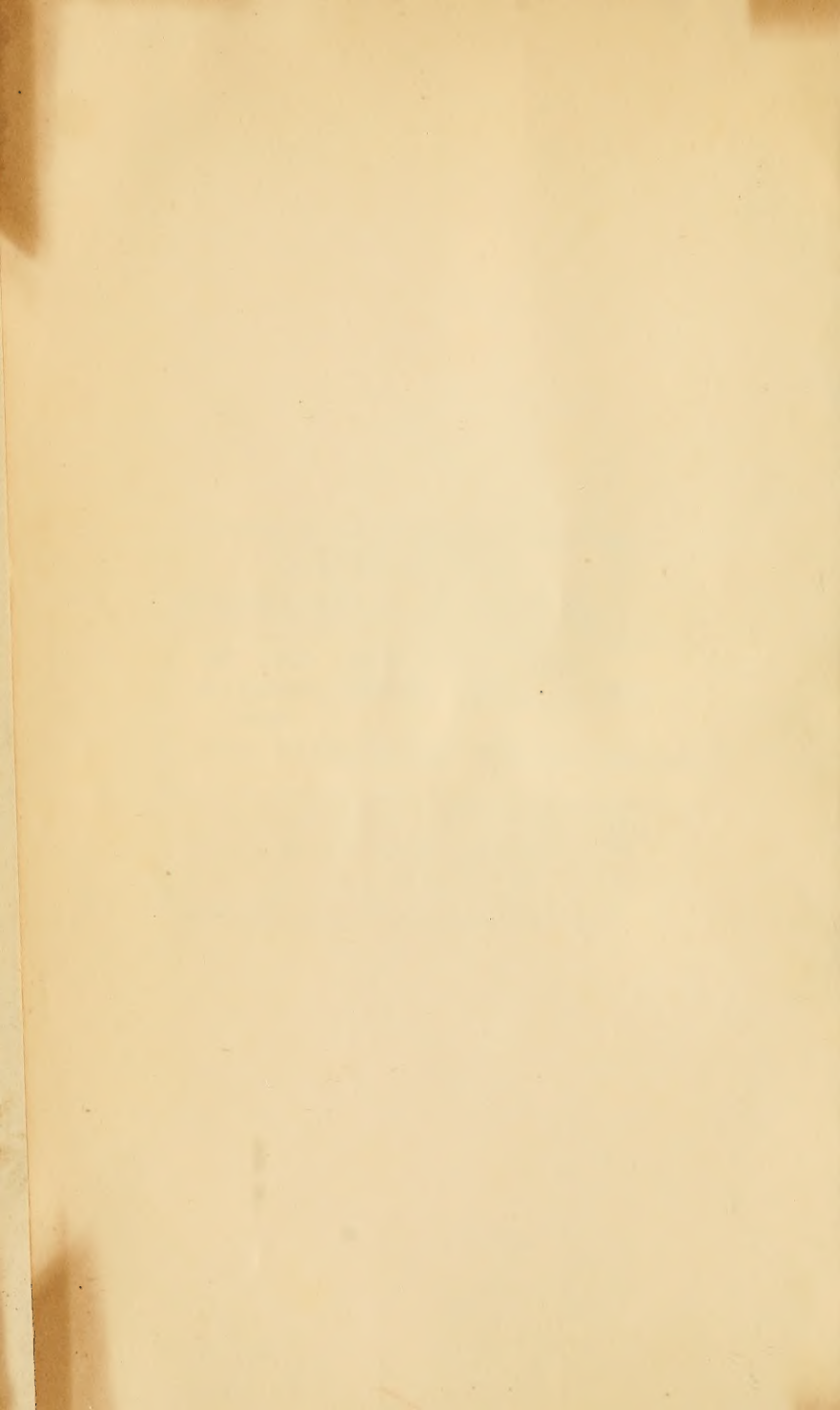
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HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

I.





THE HISTORY  
OF  
CHRISTIANITY,

FROM  
THE BIRTH OF CHRIST  
TO  
THE ABOLITION OF PAGANISM  
IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

BY  
THE REV. H. H. MILMAN,  
PREBENDARY OF ST. PETER'S, AND MINISTER OF ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

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VOL. I.



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1840.





## PREFACE.

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THE History of the Jews was that of a Nation, the History of Christianity is that of a Religion. Yet, as the Jewish Annals might be considered in their relation to the general history of man, to the rank which the nation bore among the various families of the human race, and the influence which it exercised on the civilisation of mankind : so Christianity may be viewed either in a strictly religious, or rather in a temporal, social, and political light. In the former case the writer will dwell almost exclusively on the religious doctrines, and will bear continual reference to the new relation established between man and the Supreme Being : the predominant character will be that of the Theologian. In the latter, although he may not altogether decline the examination of the religious doctrines, their development and their variations, his leading object will be to trace the effect of Christianity on the individual and social happiness of man, its influence on the Polity, the Laws and Institutions, the opinions, the manners, even on the Arts and the Literature of the Christian world : he will write rather as an Historian than a religious Instructor. Though, in fact, a candid and dispassionate survey of the connection of Christianity with the temporal happiness, and with the intellectual and social advancement of mankind, even to the religious inquirer, cannot but be of high importance and interest ; while with the general mass, at least of the reading and intelligent part of the community, nothing tends so powerfully to the strengthening or weakening of religious impression and sentiment, nothing acts so extensively, even though perhaps indirectly, on the formation of religious opinions, and on the speculative or practical belief or rejection of Christianity, as the notions we entertain of its influence on the history of man, and its relation to human happiness and social improvement. This latter is the express design of the

present work, of which the plan and scope will be more fully explained at the close of the Introductory Chapter.

If at any time I entertained doubts as to the expediency of including an historical view of the Life of the Saviour in the history of his religion, those doubts have been set at rest by the appearance of the recent work of Strauss. Though, for reasons stated in a separate Appendix to this work, I have no hesitation in declaring my conviction that the theory of Strauss is *an historical impossibility*, yet the extraordinary sensation which this book has produced in the most learned and intellectually active nation of Europe, gives it an undeniable importance. Though, till recently, only accessible to the small, yet rapidly increasing, number of students of German literature in this country, and, from its enormous length and manner of composition, not likely to be translated into English, it has, however, already appeared in a French translation (1). After reading with much attention the work of Strauss, I turned back to my own brief and rapid outline, which had been finished some time before, and found what appeared to me a complete, though of course undesigned, refutation of his hypothesis. In my view, the Life of Christ (independent of its supernatural or religious character) offers a clear, genuine, and *purely historical* narrative, connected, by numberless fine, and obviously inartificial links, with the history of the times, full of local and temporary allusions, perfectly unpremeditated, yet of surprising accuracy, to all the events, characters, opinions, sentiments, usages, to the whole life, as it were, of that peculiar period; altogether, therefore, repudiating that mythic character which Strauss has endeavoured to trace throughout the Evangelic narrative. In all its essential character it is true and unadulterated *History* (2).

In this, however, as in all respects, I have been anxious and studious not to give my work a controversial tone. My "Life of

(1) The only good view of Strauss's work with which I am acquainted, in a language accessible to the ordinary reader, is an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, by M. E. Quinet.

(2) I agree on this point with the author of a work which appeared last year in Paris, M. Salvador. He is speaking of the Evangelic History, — une œuvre enfin dans laquelle le lieu de la scène, le héros, les figures accessoires, tout le

matériel, appartiennent à cette nation même, et où chaque ligne exige, pour être comprise, la connaissance rigoureuse de son histoire, de ses lois, et de ses mœurs anciennes, des localités, préjugés, du langage, des opinions populaires, des sectes, du gouvernement, et des diverses classes de Juifs existant aux époques où les événements sont rapportés. — *Jésus-Christ ; sa Doctrine*, etc. tom. i. p. 159.

Christ" remains exactly as it was originally written; excepting in one or two notes. I have reserved entirely my reference to the work of Strauss for a separate Appendix. In these animadversions, and in some scattered observations which I have here and there ventured to make in my notes, on foreign, chiefly German, writers, I shall not be accused of that narrow jealousy, and, in my opinion, unworthy and timid suspicion, with which the writers of that country are proscribed by many. I am under too much obligation to their profound research and philosophical tone of thought, not openly to express my gratitude to such works of German writers as I have been able to obtain, which have had any bearing on the subject of my inquiries.

I could wish most unfeignedly that our modern literature were so rich in writings displaying the same unwearied industry, the same universal command of the literature of all ages and all countries, the same boldness, sagacity, and impartiality in historical criticism, as to enable us to dispense with such assistance. Though, in truth, with more or less of these high qualifications, German literature unites religious views of every shade and character, from the *Christliche Mystik* of Goerres, which would bring back the faith of Europe to the Golden Legend and the Hagiography of what we still venture to call the dark ages, down, in regular series, to Strauss, or, if there be any thing below Strauss, in the descending scale of Christian belief.

On all other points, especially those which are at present agitated in this country, though of course I cannot be, yet I have written as if in total ignorance of the existence of such discussions. I have delivered, without fear, and without partiality, what I have conscientiously believed to be the truth. I write for the general reader, rather than for the members of my own profession; as I cannot understand why such subjects of universal interest should be secluded as the peculiar objects of study to one class or order alone.

In one respect, the present possesses an advantage, in which the former work of the Author, from its size and form, was unavoidably deficient,—the greater copiousness of confirmatory and



illustrative quotation. I trust that I have avoided the opposite error of encumbering and overloading either my text or my notes with the conflicting opinions of former writers. Nothing is more easy than this prodigal accumulation of authorities ; it would have been a very light task to have swelled the notes to twice the size of the volumes. The Author's notion of history is, that it should give the results, not the process of inquiry ; and, however difficult this may be, during the period of which he now writes, where the authenticity of almost every document is questioned, and every minute point is a controversy, he has with his utmost diligence investigated, and with scrupulous fidelity repeated, what appeared to him to be the truth. Once or twice only, where the authorities are so nicely balanced, that it is almost impossible to form a satisfactory conclusion, he has admitted the conflicting arguments into the Text ; and he has always cautiously avoided to deliver that, which is extremely problematical, as historical certainty. Where he has deviated from his ordinary practice of citing few rather than many names in his notes, it is on certain subjects, chiefly Oriental, on which the opinions of well-known scholars possess, in themselves, weight and authority.

If he should be blest with life and leisure, the Author cannot but look forward to the continuation of this History with increasing interest, as it approaches the period of the re-creation of European society under the influence of Christianity. As Christian History, surveyed in a wise and candid spirit, cannot but be a useful school for the promotion of Christian faith ; so no study can tend more directly to, or more imperatively enforce on all unprejudiced and dispassionate minds, mutual forbearance, enlightened toleration, and the greatest even of Christian virtues, Christian charity.

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# HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.



## BOOK I.

### CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—STATE AND VARIOUS FORMS OF PAGAN RELIGION, AND OF PHILOSOPHY.

THE reign of Augustus Cæsar is the most remarkable epoch in the history of mankind. For the first time, a large part of the families, tribes, and nations, into which the human race had gradually separated, were united under a vast, uniform, and apparently permanent, social system. The older Asiatic empires had, in general, owed their rise to the ability and success of some adventurous conqueror; and, when the master-hand was withdrawn, fell asunder; or were swept away to make room for some new kingdom or dynasty, which sprang up with equal rapidity, and in its turn experienced the same fate. The Grecian monarchy established by Alexander, as though it shared in the Asiatic principle of vast and sudden growth and as rapid decay, broke up at his death into several conflicting kingdoms; yet survived in its influence, and united, in some degree, Western Asia, Egypt, and Greece into one political system, in which the Greek language and manners predominated. But the monarchy of Rome was founded on principles as yet unknown; the kingdoms, which were won by the most unjustifiable aggression, were, for the most part, governed with a judicious union of firmness and conciliation, in which the conscious strength of irresistible power was tempered with the wisest respect to national usages. The Romans conquered like savages, but ruled like philosophic statesmen (1). Till, from the Euphrates to

Æra of  
Augustus  
Cæsar.

(1) On the capture of a city, promiscuous massacre was the general order, which descended even to brute animals, until a certain signal. Polyb. x. 15. As to the latter point, I mean, of

course, the general policy, not the local tyranny, which was so often exercised by the individual provincial governor.

the Atlantic, from the shores of Britain, and the borders of the German forests, to the sands of the African Desert, the whole Western world was consolidated into one great commonwealth, united by the bonds of law and government, by facilities of communication and commerce, and by the general dissemination of the Greek and Latin languages.

Roman  
Civilisa-  
tion.

For civilisation followed in the train of Roman conquest: the ferocity of her martial temperament seemed to have spent itself in the civil wars: the lava flood of her ambition had cooled; and wherever it had spread, a rich and luxuriant vegetation broke forth. At least down to the time of the Antonines, though occasionally disturbed by the contests which arose on the change of dynasties, the rapid progress of improvement was by no means retarded. Diverging from Rome as a centre, magnificent and commodious roads connected the most remote countries; the free navigation of the Mediterranean united the most flourishing cities of the empire; the military colonies had disseminated the language and manners of the South in the most distant regions; the wealth and population of the African and Asiatic provinces had steadily increased; while, amid the forests of Gaul, the morasses of Britain, the sierras of Spain, flourishing cities arose; and the arts, the luxuries, the order, and regularity of cultivated life were introduced into regions which, a short time before, had afforded a scanty and precarious subsistence to tribes scarcely acquainted with agriculture. The frontiers of civilisation seemed gradually to advance, and to drive back the still-receding barbarism (1): while within the pale, national distinctions were dying away; all tribes and races met amicably in the general relation of Roman subjects or citizens and mankind seemed settling down into one great federal society (2).

Appear-  
ance of  
Christian-  
ity.

About this point of time Christianity appeared. As Rome had united the whole Western world into one, as it might almost seem, lasting social system, so Christianity was the first religion which aimed at an universal and permanent moral conquest. The religions of the older world were content with their dominion over the particular people which were their several votaries. Family, tribal, national, deities were universally recognised; and as their gods accompanied the migrations or the conquests of different nations, their worship was extended over a wider surface, but rarely propagated among the subject races. To drag in triumph the divinities of a vanquished people was the last and most insulting mark of subjugation (3). Yet, though the gods of the conquerors, had thus

The older  
Religions.

(1) *Quæ sparsa congregaret imperia, ritusque molliret, et tot populorum discordes ferasque linguas sermonis commercio contraheret ad colloquia, et humanitatem homini daret.* Plin. Nat. Hist. iii. 5.

(2) "Unum esse reipublicæ corpus, atque

unius animo regendum." Such was the argument of Asinius Gallus, Tac. Ann. i. 12.

(3) Tot de diis, quot de gentibus triumphis. Tertullian. Compare Isaiah, xlvii. 1., and Gese-  
nius's note; Jer. xlviii. 7. xlix. 3.; Hos. x. 5, 6.;  
Dan. xi. 8.



manifested their superiority, and, in some cases, the subject nation might be inclined to desert their inefficient protectors, who had been found wanting in the hour of trial; still the godhead even of the defeated divinities was not denied: though their power could not withstand the mightier tutelar deity of the invaders; yet their right to a seat in the crowded synod of heaven, and their rank among the intermediate rulers of the world, was not called in question (1). The conqueror might, indeed, take delight in showing his contempt, and, as it were, trampling under foot the rebuked and impotent deities of his subject; and thus religious persecution be inflicted by the oppressor, and religious fanaticism excited among the oppressed. Yet, if the temple was desecrated, the altar thrown down, the priesthood degraded or put to the sword, this was done in the fierceness of hostility, or the insolence of pride (2); or from policy, lest the religion should become the rallying point of civil independence (3); rarely, if ever, for the purpose of extirpating a false, or supplanting it by a true, system of belief; perhaps in no instance with the design of promulgating the tenets of a more pure and perfect religion. A wiser policy commenced with Alexander. The deities of the conquered nations were treated with uniform reverence, the sacrilegious plunder of their temples punished with exemplary severity (4). According to the Grecian system, their own gods were recognised in those of Egypt and Asia; they were called by Grecian names (5), and worshipped with the accustomed offerings; and thus all religious differences between Macedonian, and Syrian, and Egyptian, and Persian, at once vanished away. On the same principle, and with equal sagacity, Rome, in this as in other respects, aspired to enslave the mind of those nations which had been prostrated by her arms. The gods of the subject nations were treated with every mark of respect: sometimes they were admitted within the walls of the conqueror, as though to render their allegiance, and rank themselves in peaceful subordination under the supreme divinity of the Roman Gradivus,

Policy of  
Alexander;

of Rome.

(1) There is a curious passage in Lydus de Ostentis, a book which probably contains some parts of the ancient ritual of Rome. A certain aspect of a comet not merely foretold victory, but the passing over of the hostile gods to the side of the Romans: *καὶ αὐτὰ δὲ τὰ θεῖα καταλείψουσι τοὺς πολεμίους, ὥστε ἐκ περισσοῦ προστεθῆναι τοῖς νικηταῖς.* — Lydus de Ostentis, lib. 12.

(2) Such was the conduct of Cambyses in Egypt. Xerxes had, before his Grecian invasion, shown the proud intolerance of his disposition, in destroying the deities of the Babylonians, and slaying their priesthood (Herod. i. 183., and Arrian, vii. 19.); though, in this case, the rapacity which fatally induced him to pillage and desecrate the temples of Greece may have

combined with his natural arrogance. Herod. viii. 53.

(3) This was most likely the principle of the horrible persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, though a kind of heathen bigotry seems to have mingled with his strange character. 1 Macc. i. 41. et seqq. 2 Macc. vi. Diod. Sic. xxxiv. 4. Hist. of the Jews, vol. ii. p. 42.

(4) Arrian, lib. vi. p. 431. 439. (Edit. Amst. 1668.); Polyb. v. 10.

(5) Arrian, lib. iii. p. 158., vii. p. 464., and 486. Some Persian traditions, perhaps, represent Alexander as a religious persecutor; but these are of no authority against the direct statement of the Greek historians. The Indian religious usages, and the conduct of some of their faquirs, excited the wonder of the Greeks.

or the Jupiter of the Capitol (1); till, at length, they all met in the amicable synod of the Pantheon, a representative assembly, as it were, of the presiding deities of all nations, in Rome, the religious as well as the civil capital of the world (2). The state, as Cicero shows in his Book of Laws, retained the power of declaring what forms of religion were permitted by the law (*licitæ*) (3); but this authority was rarely exercised with rigour, excepting against such foreign superstitions as were considered pernicious to the morals of the people, in earlier times, the Dionysiac (4); in later, the Isiac and Serapic rites (5).

Universal-  
ity of  
Christian-  
ity.

Christianity proclaimed itself the religion not of family, or tribe, or nation, but of universal man. It admitted within its pale, on equal terms, all ranks and all races. It addressed mankind as one brotherhood, sprung from one common progenitor, and raised to immortality by one Redeemer. In this respect Christianity might appear singularly adapted to become the religion of a great empire. At an earlier period in the annals of the world, it would have encountered obstacles apparently insurmountable, in passing from one province to another, in moulding hostile and jealous nations into one religious community. A fiercer fire was necessary to melt and fuse the discordant elements into one kindred mass, before its gentler warmth could penetrate and permeate the whole with its vivifying influence. Not only were the circumstances of the times favourable to the extensive propagation of Christianity, from the facility of intercourse between the most remote nations, the cessation of hostile movements, and the uniform system of internal police, but the state of mankind seemed imperiously to demand the introduction of a new religion, to satisfy those universal propensities of human nature, which connect man with a higher order of things. Man, as history and experience teach, is essentially a

(1) Solere Romanos Deos omnes urbium superatarum partim privatim per familias, spargere, partim publice consecrare. Arnob. iii. 38.

It was a grave charge against Marcellus, that, by plundering the temples in Sicily, he had made the state an object of jealousy (*ἐπιφθονία*), because not only men but gods were led in triumph. The older citizens approved rather the conduct of Fabius Maximus, who left to the Tarantines their offended gods. Plut. Vit. Marc.

(2) According to Verrius Flaccus, cited by Pliny (xxviii. 2.), the Romans used to invoke the tutelary deity of every place which they besieged, and bribed him to their side by promising greater honours. Macrobius has a copy of the form of Evocation. The name of the tutelary deity of Rome was a secret. Plut. Nat. H. iii. 5. Bayle, Art. Soranus. Plut. Quæst. Rom. Note on Hume's Hist. Nat. Rel. Essays, p. 450.

Roma triumphantis quotiens ducis inclita curram  
Plausibus exceperit, totiens altaria Divum  
Addidit, et spoliis sibimet nova numina fecit.

PRUDENTIUS.

Compare Augustin de Cons. Evang. i. 18.

For the Grecian custom on this subject, see Thucyd. iv. 98. Philip, the king of Macedon, defeated by Flaminius in his wars with the Grecian states, paid little respect to the temples. His admiral Dicaarchus is said to have erected and sacrificed on two altars to Impiety and Lawlessness, *Ἀσεβεία* and *Παρανομία*. This fact would be incredible on less grave authority than that of Polybius, lib. xviii. 37. On the general respect to temples in war, comp. Grot. de Jur. Bell. et Pac. iii. 12. 6.

(3) The question is well discussed by Jortin, Discourses, p. 53. note. Dionysius Hal. distinguishes between religions permitted, and publicly received. lib. ii. vol. i. p. 275. edit. Reiske.

(4) Livy, xxix. 12. et seqq.

(5) During the republic, the temples of Isis and Serapis were twice ordered to be destroyed, Dion. xl. p. 142., xlii. p. 196., also liv. p. 525, Val. Max. i. 3. Prop. ii. 24. On the Roman law on this subject, compare Jortin, Discourses, p. 53. Gibbon, vol. i. p. 53, with Wenck's note.

religious being ; there are certain faculties and modes of thinking and feeling apparently inseparable from his mental organisation, which lead him irresistibly to seek some communication with another and a higher world. But at the present juncture, the ancient religions were effete : they belonged to a totally different state of civilisation ; though they retained the strong hold of habit and interest on different classes of society, yet the general mind was advanced beyond them ; they could not supply the religious necessities of the age. Thus, the world, peaceably united under one temporal monarchy, might be compared to a vast body without a soul : the throne of the human mind appeared vacant ; among the rival competitors for its dominion, none advanced more than claims local, or limited to a certain class. Nothing less was required than a religion co-extensive with the empire of Rome, and calculated for the advanced state of intellectual culture : and in Christianity this new element of society was found ; which, in fact, incorporating itself with manners, usages, and laws, has been the bond which has held together, notwithstanding the internal feuds and divisions, the great European commonwealth ; maintained a kind of federal relation between its parts ; and stamped its peculiar character on the whole of modern history.

Christianity announced the appearance of its Divine Author as the era of a new moral creation ; and if we take our stand, as it were, on the isthmus which separates the ancient from the modern world, and survey the state of mankind before and after the introduction of this new power into human society, it is impossible not to be struck with the total revolution in the whole aspect of the world. If from this point of view we look upward, we see the dissociating principle at work both in the civil and religious usages of mankind ; the human race breaking up into countless independent tribes and nations, which recede more and more from each other as they gradually spread over the surface of the earth ; and in some parts, as we adopt the theory of the primitive barbarism (1), or that of the degeneracy of man from an earlier state of culture, either remaining stationary at the lowest point of ignorance and rudeness, or sinking to it ; either resuming the primeval dignity of the race, or rising gradually to a higher state of civilisation. A certain diversity of religion follows the diversity of race, of people, and of country. In no respect is the common nature of human kind so strongly indicated

Dissociating principle of old religions.

(1) The notion that the primeval state of man was altogether barbarous and uncivilised, so generally prevalent in the philosophy of the two last centuries (for Dryden's line,

Since wild in woods the noble savage ran,

contains the whole theory of Rousseau) has encountered a strong reaction. It is remarkable that Niebuhr in Germany, and Archbishop Whateley in this country, with no knowledge of each

other's views, should at the same time call in question this, almost established, theory. Dr. Whateley's argument, that there is no instance in history of a nation self-raised from savage life, is very strong. I have been much struck by finding a very strong and lucid statement to the same effect, in an unpublished lecture of the late Lord Stowell (Sir William Scott), delivered when professor of History at Oxford.



as in the universality of some kind of religion ; in no respect is man so various, yet so much the same. All the religions of antiquity, multiform and countless as they appear, may be easily reduced to certain classes, and, independent of the traditions which they may possess in common, throughout the whole, reigns something like a family resemblance. Whether all may be rightly considered as depravations of the same primitive form of worship ; whether the human mind is necessarily confined to a certain circle of religious notions ; whether the striking phenomena of the visible world, presented to the imagination of various people in a similar state of civilisation, will excite the same train of devotional thoughts and emotions,—the philosophical spirit, and extensive range of inquiry, which in modern times have been carried into the study of mythology, approximate in the most remarkable manner the religions of the most remote countries (1). The same primary principles everywhere appear, modified by the social state, the local circumstances, the civil customs, the imaginative or practical character of the people. Each state of social culture has its characteristic theology, self-adapted to the intellectual and moral condition of the people, and coloured in some degree by the habits of life. In the rudest and most savage races we find a gross superstition, called by modern

Fetichism. foreign writers, Fetichism (2), in which the shapeless stone, the meanest reptile, any object however worthless or insignificant, is consecrated by a vague and mysterious reverence, as the representative of an unseen Being. The beneficence of this deity is usually limited to supplying the wants of the day, or to influencing the hourly occurrences of a life, in which violent and exhausting labour alternates either with periods of sluggish and torpid indolence, as among some of the North American tribes ; or, as among the Africans, with wild bursts of thoughtless merriment (3). This Fetichism apparently survived in more polished nations, in the household

(1) The best, in my opinion, and most comprehensive work on the ancient religions, is the (yet unfinished) translation of Creuzer's *Symbolik*, by M. De Guignaut, *Religions de l'Antiquité*, Paris, 1825. 1835. It is far superior in arrangement, and does not appear to me so obstinately wedded to the symbolic theory as the original of Creuzer. The *Aglaophamus* of Lobeck, as might be expected from that distinguished scholar, is full of profound and accurate erudition. Yet I cannot but think that the Grecian polytheism will be better understood when considered in connection with the other religions of antiquity, than as an entirely independent system ; and surely the sarcastic tone in which M. Lobeck speaks of the Oriental studies of his cotemporaries is unworthy of a man of consummate learning. The work of the late M. Constant, *Sur la Religion*, extensive in research, ingenious in argument, and eloquent in style, is in my, perhaps partial, judgment, vitiated by an hostility to every kind of priesthood, better suited to the philosophy of the last than of the present century. M. Constant has placed the evils of sacerdotal influence in the strongest light, and

disguised or dissembled its advantages. The ancient priestly castes, I conceive, attained their power over the rest of their race by their acknowledged superiority ; they were the benefactors, and thence the rulers of their people : *to retain their power*, as the people advanced, they resorted to every means of keeping men in ignorance and subjection, and so degenerated into the tyrants of the human mind. At all events, sacerdotal domination (and here M. Constant would have agreed with us) is altogether alien to genuine Christianity.

(2) The Fetiché of the African is the Manitou of the American Indian. The word Fetiché was first, I believe, brought into general use in the curious volume of the *Président De Brosses, Du Culte des Dieux Fétiches*. The word was formed by the traders to Africa, from the Portuguese, *Fetisso*, *chose fée*, *enchantée*, divine, ou rendant des oracles. De Brosses, p. 18.

(3) Hume (*History of Nat. Religion*) argues that a pure and philosophical theism could never be the creed of a barbarous nation struggling with want.



gods, perhaps in the Teraphim, and in the sacred stones (the Bœtylia), which were thought either to have fallen from heaven, or were sanctified by immemorial reverence.

In the Oriental pastoral tribes, Tsabaism (1), the simpler worship of the heavenly bodies, in general prevailed; which among the agricultural races grew up into a more complicated system, connecting the periodical revolutions of the sun and moon with the pursuits of husbandry. It was Nature-worship, simple in its primary elements, but branching out into mythological fables, rich and diversified in proportion to the poetic genius of the people. This Nature-worship in its simpler, probably its earlier form, appears as a sort of dualism, in which two great antagonist powers, the creative and destructive, Light and Darkness, seem contending for the sovereignty of the world, and, emblematical of moral good and evil, are occupied in pouring the full horn of fertility and blessing, or the vial of wrath and misery, upon the human race. Subordinate to, or as a modification of, these two conflicting powers, most of the Eastern races concurred in deifying the active and passive powers of generation. The sun and the earth, Osiris and Isis, formed a second dualism. And it is remarkable how widely, almost universally extended throughout the earlier world, appears the institution of a solemn period of mourning about the autumnal, and of rejoicing about the vernal, equinox (2). The suspension, or apparent extinction of the great (3) vivifying power of nature, Osiris or Iacchus; the destitution of Ceres, Isis, or the Earth, of her husband or her beautiful daughter, torn in pieces or carried away into their realms by the malignant powers of darkness; their re-appearance in all their bright and fertilising energy; these, under different forms, were the great annual fast and festival of the early heathen worship (4). But the poets were the priests of this Nature-worship; and from their creative imagination arose the popular mythology, which gave its separate deity to every part of animate or inanimate being; and, departing still farther from the primitive allegory, and the symbolic forms under which the phenomena of the visible world were embodied, wandered into pure fiction; till nature-worship was almost supplanted by religious fable: and hence,

Tsabaism.

Nature-worship.

Poets.

(1) The astral worship of the East is ably and clearly developed in an *Excursus* at the end of Gesenius's *Isaiah*.

(2) Plutarch, de Iside et Osiride: — Φρύγες τὸν θεὸν οἰόμενοι χειμῶνος μὲν καθεύδειν, Θέρους δ' ἐγρηγορέναι, τότε μὲν κατευνασμούς, τότε δ' ἀνεγέρσεις καυχέοντες αὐτῶν τελοῦσι. Παλαιῶνες δὲ καταδεῖσθαι καὶ καθεῖργυσθαι χειμῶνος, ἦρος δὲ ἀναλύεσθαι φάσκουσι.

(3) Bohlen (das Alte Indien, p. 139 et seq.) gives a long list of these festivals of the sun. Lobeck (i. 690.) would altogether deny their symbolical character. It is difficult, however, to

account for the remarkable similarity between the usages of so many distinct nations in the New World as well as the Old, in Peru and Florida, in Gaul and Britain, as in India and Syria, without some such common origin. See Picart's large work *Cérémonies et Coutumes Religieuses, passim*.

Compare likewise Dr. Pritchard's valuable work on Egyptian Mythology; on the Deification of the Active and Passive Powers of Generation; the Marriage of the Sun and the Earth, p. 40., and pp. 62—75.

(4) Nam rudis ante illos, nullo discrimine, vita In speciem conversa, operum ratione carebat, Et stupefacta novo pendebat lumine mundi. Tum velut amissis mærens, tum læta renatis Sideribus, etc.

by a natural transition, those who discerned God in every thing, multiplied every separate part of creation into a distinct divinity. The mind fluctuated between a kind of vague and unformed pantheism, the deification of the whole of nature, or its animation by one pervading power or soul, and the deification of every object which impressed the mind with awe or admiration (1). While every nation, every tribe, every province, every town, every village, every family, had its peculiar, local, or tutelar deity, there was a kind of common neutral ground on which they all met, a notion that the gods in their collective capacity exercised a general controlling providence over the affairs of men, interfered, especially on great occasions, and, though this belief was still more vague and more inextricably involved in fable, administered retribution in another state of being. And thus even the common language of the most polytheistic nations approached to monotheism (2).

Priestly  
caste.

Wherever, indeed, there has been a great priestly caste, less occupied with the daily toils of life, and advanced beyond the mass of the people, the primitive nature-worship has been perpetually brought back, as it were, to its original elements; and, without disturbing the popular mythological religion, furnished a creed to the higher and more thinking part of the community, less wild and extravagant (3). In Persia the Magian order retained or acquired something like a pure theism, in which the Supreme Deity was represented under the symbol of the primal uncreated fire; and their Nature-worship, under the form of the two conflicting principles, preserved much more of its original simplicity than in most other countries. To the influence of a distinct sacerdotal order may be traced (4), in India, the singular union of the sublimest allegory,

(1) Some able writers are of opinion that the reverse of this was the case—that the variety was the primary belief; the simplification the work of a later and more intellectual age. On this point A. W. Schlegel observes, “The more I investigate the ancient history of the world, the more I am convinced that the civilised nations set out from a purer worship of the Supreme Being; that the magic power of Nature over the imagination of the successive human races, first, at a later period, produced polytheism, and, finally, altogether obscured the more spiritual religious notions in the popular belief; while the wise alone preserved within the sanctuary the primeval secret. Hence mythology appears to me the last developed and most changeable part of the old religion. The divergence of the various mythologies, therefore, proves nothing against the descent of the religions from a common source. The mythologies might be locally formed, according to the circumstances of climate or soil; it is impossible to mistake this with regard to the Egyptian myths.” Schlegel, p. 16. *Preface to Pritchard's Egyptian Mythology*. My own views, considering the question in a purely historical light, coincide with those of M. Schlegel.

(2) This is strikingly expressed by a Christian writer:—“Audio vulgus cum ad cælum manus tendunt, nihil aliud quam Deum dicunt, et Deus

magnus est, et Deus verus est, et si Deus dederit. Vulgi iste naturalis sermo est, an Christiani contentis oratio?” Min. Fel. Octavius. The same thought may be found in Cyprian, de Van. Idol., and Tertullian, Apolog.

(3) This is nowhere more openly professed than in China. The early Jesuit missionaries assert that the higher class (the *litteratorum secta*) despised the idolatry of the vulgar. One of the charges against the Christians was their teaching the worship of one God, which they had full liberty to worship themselves, to the *common people*:—“Non aequè placere, rudem plebeculam rerum novarum cupiditate, cœli Dominum venerat.” Trigault, *Exped. in Sinas*, pp. 438—575.

(4) “The learned brahmins adore one God, without form or quality, eternal, unchangeable, and occupying all space: but they carefully confine these doctrines to their own schools, as dangerous; and teach in public a religion, in which, in supposed compliance with the infirmities and passions of human nature, the deity is brought more to a level with our prejudices and wants. The incomprehensible attributes ascribed to him are invested with sensible and even human forms. The mind, lost in meditation, and fatigued in the pursuit of something, which, being divested of all sensible qualities, suffers the thoughts to wander without finding a resting-

and a sort of lofty poetical religious philosophy, with the most monstrous and incoherent superstitions; and the appearance of the profound political religion of Egypt in strange juxtaposition with the most debasing Fetichism, the worship of reptiles and vegetables (1).

From this Nature-worship arose the beautiful anthropomorphism of the Greeks, of which the Homeric poetry, from its extensive and lasting popularity, may in one sense be considered the parent. The primitive traditions and the local superstitions of the different races were moulded together in these songs, which, disseminated throughout Greece, gave a kind of federal character to the religion of which they were, in some sort, the sacred books. But the genius of the people had already assumed its bias: few, yet still some, vestiges remain in Homer of the earlier theogonic fables (2). Conscious, as it were, and prophetic of their future pre-eminence in all that constitutes the physical and mental perfection of our race, this wonderful people conformed their religion to themselves. The cumbrous and multiform idol, in which wisdom, or power, or fertility, were represented by innumerable heads or arms, or breasts, as in the Ephesian Diana, was refined into a being, only distinguished from human nature by its preterhuman development of the noblest physical qualities of man. The imagination here took another and a nobler course; it threw an ideal grandeur and an unearthly loveliness over the human form, and by degrees deities became men, and men deities, or, as the distinction between the godlike (*θεοεικελος*) and the divine (*θεος*) became more indistinct, were united in the intermediate form of heroes and demi-gods. The character of the people here, as elsewhere, operated on the religion; the religion re-acted on the popular character. The religion of Greece was the religion of the Arts, the Games, the Theatre; it was that of a race, living always in public, by whom the corporeal perfection of man had been carried to the highest point. In no other country would

Anthropo-  
morphism  
of the  
Greeks.

place, is happy, they tell us, to have an object on which human feelings and human senses may again find repose. To give a metaphysical deity to ignorant and sensual men, absorbed in the cares of supporting animal existence, and entangled in the impediments of matter, would be to condemn them to atheism. Such is the mode in which the brahmins excuse the gross idolatry of their religion." William Erskine, *Bombay Transactions*, i. 199. Compare Colebrooke, *Asiat. Res.* vii. 279.; and other quotations in Bohlen, *Das Alte Indien*, i. 153., which indeed might be multiplied without end. Mr. Mill (*Hist. of India*), among the ablest and most uncompromising opponents of the high view of Indian civilisation, appears to me not to pay sufficient attention to this point.

(1) Heeren has conjectured, with his usual ingenuity, or rather perhaps has adopted from De Brosses, the theory, that the higher part of the Egyptian religion was that of a foreign and dominant caste; the worship of plants and brutes,

the original undisturbed Fetichism of the primitive and barbarous African race. (Compare Von Hammer, *Geschichte der Assassinen*, p. 57.) On the whole, I prefer this theory to that of Cicero (*Nat. Deor.* i. 36.), that it was derived from mere usefulness; to the political reasons suggested by Plutarch (*de Isid. et Osir.*); to that of Porphyry (*de Abst.* iv. 9.), which, however, is adopted, and, I think, made more probable by Dr. Pritchard in his *Egyptian Mythology*, from the transmigration of the soul into beasts; of Marsham and Warburton, from hieroglyphics; of Lucian (*de Astrol.*) and Dupuis, from the connection with astronomy; or, finally, that of Bohlen (*Das Alte Indien*, i. 186.), who traces its origin to the consecration of particular animals to particular deities among their Indian ancestors.

(2) Nothing can be more groundless or unsuccessful than the attempt of later writers to frame an allegorical system out of Homer; the history and design of this change are admirably traced by Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, i. 158.



the legislator have taken under his protection the physical conformation, in some cases the procreation, in all the development of the bodily powers by gymnastic education; and it required the most consummate skill in the sculptor to preserve the endangered pre-eminence of the gods, in whose images were embodied the perfect models of power and grace and beauty (1).

Religion  
of Rome.

The religion of Rome was political and military (2). Springing originally from a kindred stock to that of earlier Greece, the rural Gods of the first cultivators of Italy (3), it received many of its rites from that remarkable people, the Etruscans; and rapidly adapted itself, or was forced by the legislator into an adaptation to the character of the people (4). Mars or Gradivus was the divine ancestor of the race (5). The religious calendar was the early history of the people; a large part of the festivals was not so much the celebration of the various deities, as the commemoration of the great events in their annals (6). The priesthood was united with the highest civil and military offices; and the great occupation of Roman worship seems to have been to secure the stability of her constitution, and still more, to give a religious character to her wars, and infuse a religious confidence of success into her legionaries. The great office of the diviners, whether augurs or aruspices, was to choose the fortunate day of battle; the Fetiales, religious officers, denounced war: the standards and eagles possessed a kind of sanctity; the eagle was in fact a shrine (7). The altar had its place in the centre of the camp, as the ark of God in that of the Israelites. The Triumph may be considered as the great religious ceremony of the nation; the god Terminus, who never receded, was, as it were, the deified ambition of Rome. At length Rome herself was impersonated and assumed her rank in heaven, as it were the representative of the all-conquering and all-ruling republic.

Moral Ele-  
ment of  
Roman  
Religion.

There was a stronger moral element in the Roman religion, than in that of Greece (8). In Greece the gods had been repre-

(1) Maximus Tyrius (Dissert. viii.) defends the anthropomorphism of the Greeks, and distinguishes it from the symbolic worship of barbarians, "If the soul of man is the nearest and most like to God, God would not have enclosed in an unworthy tabernacle that which bears the closest resemblance to himself." Hence he argues that God ought to be represented under the noblest form, that of man.

(2) Dionysius Halicarn. compares the grave and serious character of the Roman as contrasted with the Greek religion. The Romans rejected many of the more obscene and monstrous fables of the Greeks. But it is as part of the civil polity that he chiefly admires the Roman religion, lib. ii. c. 7.

(3) The Palilia and other rural rites. The statues of the goddesses Seja and Segesta, of seed and of harvest, stood in the great Circus in the time of Pliny. H. N. xviii. 2.

(4) Beaufort's *Republique Romaine*, b. i. ch. 5. Compare the recent and valuable work of Walter, *Geschichte des Römischen Rechts*, p. 177.

(5) Et tamen ante omnes Martem coluere priores, Hoc dederat studiis bellica turba suis.

After reciting the national deities of other cities, the religious poet of Rome proceeds,

Mars Latio venerandus erat; quia præsidet armis, Arma feræ genti remque decusque dabant.

Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 97.

The month of Mars began the year. Ibid.

(6) Compare the proportion of Roman and of religious legend in the *Fasti* of Ovid. See, likewise, Constant, I. 21, etc.

(7) Ὁ γὰρ ἄστρος ἀνομασμένος (ἐστὶ δὲ νεὸς μικρὸς) καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἄστρος χρυσοῦς ἐνίδρυται, Dion. Cass. xl. c. 18. Gibbon, i. 16. Moyle's Works, ii. 86. Compare Tac. Ann. i. 39.

(8) The distinction between the Roman and Greek religions is drawn with singular felicity in the two supplemental (in my opinion the most valuable and original), but unfortunately, unfinished volumes of M. Constant, *Du Polythéisme Romain*.



sented, in their collective capacity, as the avengers of great crimes; a kind of general retributive justice was assigned to them; they guarded the sanctity of oaths. But in the better days of the republic, Rome had, as it were, deified her own virtues. Temples arose to Concord, to Faith, to Constancy, to Modesty (Pudor), to Hope. The Penates, the household deities, became the guardians of domestic happiness. Venus Verticordia presided over the purity of domestic morals (1), and Jupiter Stator over courage. But the true national character of the Roman theology is most remarkably shown in the various temples, and various attributes assigned to the good Fortune of the city, who might appear the Deity of Patriotism (2). Even Peace was at length received among the gods of Rome. And as long as the worship of the heart continued to sanctify these impersonations of human virtues, their adoration tended to maintain the lofty moral tone; but as soon as that was withdrawn, or languished into apathy, the deities became cold abstractions, without even that reality which might appear to attach itself to the other gods of the city: their temples stood, their rites were perhaps solemnised, but they had ceased to command, and no longer received the active veneration of the people. What, in fact, is the general result of the Roman religious calendar, half a year of which is described in the *Fasti* of Ovid? There are festivals founded on old Italian and on picturesque Grecian legends; others commemorative of the great events of the heroic days of the republic; others instituted in base flattery of the ruling dynasty; one ceremonial only, that of the Manes (3), which relates to the doctrine of another life, and that preserved as it were from pride, and as a memorial of older times. Nothing can show more strongly the nationality of the Roman religion, and its almost complete transmutation from a moral into a political power (4).

Amidst all this labyrinth, we behold the sacred secret of the divine Unity, preserved inviolate, though sometimes under the most adverse circumstances, and, as it were, perpetually hovering on the verge of extinction, in one narrow district of the world, the province of Palestine. Nor is it there the recondite treasure of a high and learned caste, or the hardly worked-out conclusion of the thinking and philosophical few, but the plain and distinct groundwork of the popular creed. Still, even there, as though in its earlier period, the yet undeveloped mind of man was unfit for the reception, or at least for the preservation of this doctrine, in its perfect

Religion  
of the  
Jews.

(1) The most virtuous woman in Rome was chosen to dedicate her statue, Val. Max. viii. 15.

(2) Constant, i. 16.

(3) Il. 533. The Lemuria (Remuria) were instituted to appease the shade of Remus, V. 451, etc.

Ovid applies on another occasion his general maxim

Pro magnâ teste vetustas  
Creditur: acceptam parce movere fidem.

*Fasti*, iv. 203.

(4) See the fine description of *Maestas* (*Fasti*, v. 25—52.), who becomes at the end the tutelary deity of the senate and matrons, and presides over the triumphs of Rome.

spiritual purity; as though the Deity condescended to the capacities of the age, and it were impossible for the divine nature to maintain its place in the mind of man, without some visible representative; a kind of symbolic worship still enshrines the one great God of the Mosaic religion. There is a striking analogy between the Shechinah (1) or luminous appearance which "dwelt between the cherubim," and the pure immaterial fire of the Theism, which approaches nearest to the Hebrew, that of the early Persians. Yet even here likewise is found the great indelible distinction between the religion of the ancient and of the modern world; the characteristic, which besides the general practice of propitiating the Deity, usually by animal sacrifices, universally prevails in the præ-Christian ages. The physical predominates over the moral character of the Deity. God is *Power* in the old religion, he is *Love* under the new. Nor does his pure and essential spirituality, in the more complete faith of the gospel, attach itself to, or exhibit itself under any form. "God," says the divine author of Christianity, "is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." In the early Jewish worship, it was the physical power of the Deity, which was presented to the mind of the worshipper: he was their temporal king, the dispenser of earthly blessings, famine and plenty, drought and rain, discomfiture or success in war. The miracles recorded in the Old Testament, particularly in the earlier books, are amplifications, as it were, or new directions of the powers of nature; as if the object were to show that the deities of other nations were but subordinate and obedient instruments in the hand of the great self-existent being, the Jehovah of Jewish worship.

Yet, when it is said that the physical rather than the moral character of the Deity *predominated*, it must not be supposed that the latter was altogether excluded. It is impossible entirely to dissociate the notion of moral government from that belief, or that propensity to believe, in the existence of a God implanted in the human mind; and religion was too useful an ally, not to be called in to confirm the consciously imperfect authority of human law. But it may be laid down as a principle, that the nearer the nation approaches to barbarism, the childhood of the human race, the more earthly are the conceptions of the Deity; the moral aspect of the divine nature seems gradually to develop itself with the development of the human mind. It is at first, as in Egypt and India, the prerogative of the higher class; the vulgar are left to their stocks and their stones, their animals and their reptiles. In the republican states of Greece, the intellectual aristocracy of the philosophers,

God under  
the old  
and the  
new Reli-  
gion.

(1) Even if the notion of a visible Shechinah was of a later period. (note to Heber's Bampton Lectures, p. 278.): God was universally believed to have a local and personal residence behind the

veil, in the unapproachable Holy of Holies; and the imagination would thus be even more powerfully excited than by a visible symbol.

guarded by no such legally established distinction, rarely dared openly to assert their superiority; but concealed their more extended views behind a prudential veil, as a secret or esoteric doctrine, and by studious conformity to the national rites and ceremonies.

Gradually, however, as the period approaches, in which the religion of civilisation is to be introduced into the great drama of human life, as we descend nearer towards the point of separation between the ancient and modern world, the human mind appears expanding. Polytheism is evidently relaxing its hold upon all classes: the monarch maintains his throne, not from the deep-rooted, or rational, or conscientious loyalty of his subjects, but from the want of a competitor; because mankind were habituated to a government which the statesman thought it might be dangerous, and the philosopher, enjoying perfect toleration, and rather proud of his distinctive superiority, than anxious to propagate his opinions throughout the world, did not think it worth while, at the hazard of popular odium, to disturb.

Preparation for new Religion in the Heathen World.

Judaism gave manifest indications of a preparation for a more essentially spiritual, more purely moral faith. The symbolic presence of the Deity (according to their own tradition (1) ceased with the temple of Solomon; and the heathen world beheld with astonishment a whole race whose deity was represented under no visible form or likeness. The conqueror Pompey, who enters the violated temple, is filled with wonder at finding the sanctuary without image or emblem of the presiding deity (2); the poet describes them as worshipping nothing but the clouds and the divinity that fills the Heaven (3); the philosophic historian, whose profounder mind seems struggling with hostile prejudices, defines with his own inimitable compression of language, the doctrine to the sublimity of which he has closed his eyes. "The worship of the Jews is purely mental; they acknowledge but one God.—and that God supreme and eternal, neither changeable, nor perishable (4)". The doctrine of another life (which derived no sanction from the Law, and was naturally obscured by the more immediate and intelligible prospect of temporal rewards and punishments,) dawns in the prophetic writings; and from the apocryphal books and from Josephus, as well as from the writings of the New Testament, clearly appears to have become incorporated with the general sentiment. Retribution in another life has already taken the place of the immediate or speedy avenging or rewarding providence of the Deity in the land of Canaan (5).

Among the Jews.

(1) Hist. of the Jews, ii. 10.

(2) Ib. ii. 70.

(3) Nil præter nubes et cœli numen adorant. Juv. xiv. 97.

(4) Judæi mente solâ, unumque numen intelli-

gunt. \*\*\* Summum illud et æternum, neque mutabile, neque interitum. Tac. Hist. v. 5.

(5) See Chap. II., in which this question is resumed.



Expansion  
of Juda-  
ism.

of the human mind; its sacred records had preserved in its original simplicity the notion of the Divine Power; the pregnant definitions of the one great self-existing Being, the magnificent poetical amplifications of his might and providence were of all ages: they were eternal poetry, because they were eternal truth. If the moral aspect of the Divine nature was more obscurely intimated, and, in this respect, had assumed the character of a local or national Deity, whose love was confined to the chosen people, and displayed itself chiefly in the beneficence of a temporal sovereign: yet nothing was needed but to give a higher and more extensive sense to those types and shadows of universal wisdom; and improvement which the tendency of the age manifestly required; and which the Jews themselves, especially the Alexandrian school, had already attempted, by allegorising the whole annals of their people, and extracting a profound moral meaning from all the circumstances of their extraordinary history (1).

Effects of  
progress  
of know-  
ledge up-  
on poly-  
theism.

But the progress of knowledge was fatal to the popular religion of Greece and Rome. The awe-struck imagination of the older race, which had listened with trembling belief to the wildest fables, the deep feeling of the sublime and the beautiful, which uniting with national pride, had assembled adoring multitudes before the Parthenon or the Jove of Phidias, now gave place to cold and sober reason. Poetry had been religion—religion was becoming mere poetry. Humanizing the Deity, and bringing it too near the earth, naturally produced, in a less imaginative and more reflecting age, that familiarity which destroys respect. When man became more acquainted with his own nature, the less was he satisfied with deities cast in his own mould. In some respects the advancement of civilisation had no doubt softened and purified the old religions from their savage and licentious tendencies. Human sacrifices had ceased (2), or had retired to the remotest parts of Germany, or to the shores of the Baltic (3). Though some of the secret rites were

Beneficial.

(1) Philo wrote for the unbelievers among his own people, and to conciliate the Greeks. (*De Conf. Linguar.* vol. i. p. 405.) The same principle which among the heathens gave rise to the system of Euhemerus, who resolved all mythology into history, and that of the other philosophers who attempted to reduce it to allegory, induced Philo, and no doubt his predecessor Aristobulus, thus to endeavour to accommodate the Mosaic history to an incredulous age, and to blend Judaism and Platonism into one harmonious system.

(2) Human sacrifices sometimes, but rarely, occur in the earlier periods of Grecian history. According to Plutarch, *Vit. Arist.* 9. and *Vit. Themistoclis*, three sons of Sandauke, sister of the king of Persia, were offered, in obedience to an oracle, to Bacchus Omestes. The bloodstained altar of Diana of Tauris was placed by the tragedians in a barbarous region. Prisoners were sometimes slain on the tombs of warriors in much later times, as in the Homeric age, even on that

of Philopœmen. *Plut. Vit. Philop.* c. 21. Compare Tschirner, *Fall des Heidenthums*, p. 34.

Octavius is said (*Suet. Vit. Octav.*) to have sacrificed 300 Perugian captives on an altar sacred to the deified Julius (*Divo Julio*). This may be considered the sanguinary spirit of the age of proscriptions taking for once a more solemn and religious form. As to the libation of the blood of the gladiators, (see Tertullian, *Apolog.* c. 9. *Scorpiac.* 7. *Cyprian, De Spectaculis.* Compare *Porphyr. de Abstin. Lactant.* 1—21.) I should agree with M. Constant in ascribing this ceremony to the barbarity of the Roman amusements rather than to their religion. All public spectacles were, perhaps, to a certain degree religious ceremonies; but the gladiators were the victims of the sanguinary pleasures of the Roman people, not slain in honour of their gods. Constant, iv. 335. Tschirner, p. 45.

(3) *Tac. Ann.* i. 61. *Tac. Germ.* 10. 40. Compare on the gradual abolition of human sacrifices, Constant, iv. 330. The exception, which rests on



said to be defiled with unspeakable pollutions (1), yet this, if true, arose from the depravation of manners, rather than from religion. The orgies of the Bona Dea were a profanation of the sacred rite, held up to detestation by the indignant satirist, not as among some of the early Oriental nations, the rite itself.

But with the tyranny, which could thus extort from reluctant human nature the sacrifice of all humanity and all decency, the older religions had lost their more salutary, and, if the expression may be ventured, their constitutional authority. They had been driven away, or silently receded from their post, in which indeed they had never been firmly seated, as conservators of public morals. The circumstances of the times tended no less to loosen the bonds of the ancient faith. Peace enervated the deities, as well as the soldiers of Rome: their occupation was gone (2); the augurs read no longer the signs of conquest in the entrails of the victims; and though down to the days of Augustine (3), Roman pride clung to the worship of the older and glorious days of the republic, and denounced the ingratitude of forsaking gods, under whose tutelary sway Rome had become the empress of the world, yet the ceremonies had now no stirring interest; they were pageants in which the unbelieving aristocracy played their parts with formal coldness, the contagion of which could not but spread to the lower classes. The only novel or exciting rite of the Roman religion, was that which probably tended more than any other, when the immediate excitement was over, to enfeeble the religious feeling, the deification (4) of the

Prejudicial.

the authority of Pliny, xxviii. 2., and Plutarch, Vita Marii, in init. Quæst. Rom., appears to me very doubtful. The prohibitory law of Lentulus, AU. DCLVII. and Livy's striking expression, more non Romano, concerning the sacrifice said to be continued to a late period, as well as the edict of Tiberius, promulgated in the remoter provinces, indicate the general sentiment of the time. Non satis estimari potest quantum Romanis debeatur, qui sustulere monstra in quibus hominem occidere religiosissimum erat, mandis saluberrimum. Plin. H. N. xxx. 1. See in Ovid, Fasti, iii. 341. the reluctance of Numa to offer human sacrifice. Hadrian issued an edict prohibiting human sacrifices; this was directed, according to Creuzer, (Symb. i. 363.), against the later Mithriac rites, which had reintroduced the horrible practice of consulting futurity in the entrails of human victims. The savage Commodus (Lamprid. in Comm.) offered a human victim to Mithra. The East, if the accounts are to be credited, continually reacted on the religion of Rome. Human sacrifices are said to have taken place under Aurelian (Aug. Hist. Vit. Aurel.), and even under Maxentius.

(1) The dissolute rites against which the Fathers inveigh were of foreign and Oriental origin—Isiac, Bacchanalian, Mithriac. Lobeck, i. 197. See Constant, vol. iv. c. 11. Compare the Confession of Hippolytus in Livy. I cannot refrain from transcribing an observation of M. Constant on these rites, which strikes me as extremely profound and just: "La mauvaise influence des

fables licencieuses commence avec le mépris et le ridicule versé sur ces fables. Il en est de même des cérémonies. Des rites indécens peuvent être pratiqués par un peuple religieux avec une grande pureté de cœur. Mais quand l'incrédulité atteint ces peuples, ces rites sont pour lui la cause et le prétexte de la plus révoltante corruption." Du Polyth. Rom. ii. 102.

(2) Our generals began to wage civil wars against each other, as soon as they neglected the auspices. Cic. Nat. Deor. ii. 3. This is good evidence to the fact; the cause lay deeper.

(3) This was the main argument of his great work, de Civitate Dei. It is no where more strongly expressed than in the oration of Symmachus to Theodosius. Hic cultus in leges meas orbem redegit; hæc sacra Annibalem a moenibus, a Capitolio Sennonas repulerunt. This subject will frequently recur in the course of our History.

(4) The deification of Augustus found some opponents. Nihil Deorum honoribus relictum, cum se templis et effigie numinum, per flamines et sacerdotes coli vellet. Tac. Ann. i. 10. The more sagacious Tiberius shrunk from such honours. In one instance, he allowed himself to be joined in divine honours with his mother and the senate, but in general he refused them. Tac. Ann. iv. 15. 37. v. 2. The very curious satire of Seneca, the *Ἀποχολύμπσις*, though chiefly aimed at Claudius, throws ridicule on the whole ceremony. Augustus, in his speech to the gods, says, Denique dum tales deos facitis, nemo vos deos esse credit,

living, or the apotheosis of the dead emperor, whom a few years or perhaps a few days abandoned to the open execration or contempt of the whole people. At the same time that energy of mind, which had consumed itself in foreign conquest or civil faction, in carrying the arms of Rome to the Euphrates or the Rhine, or in the mortal conflict for patrician or plebeian supremacy, now that the field of military or civil distinction was closed, turned inward and preyed upon itself; or compressed by the iron hand of despotism, made itself a vent in philosophical or religious speculations. The noble mind sought a retreat from the degradation of servitude in the groves of the Academy, or attempted to find consolation for the loss of personal dignity, by asserting with the Stoic the dignity of human nature (1).

Philoso-  
phy.

But Philosophy aspired in vain to fill that void in the human mind, which had been created by the expulsion or secession of religion. The objects of Philosophy were twofold, either—1. to refine the popular religion into a more rational creed; or 2. to offer itself as a substitute. With this first view it endeavoured to bring back the fables to their original meaning (2), to detect the latent truth under the allegoric shell: but in many cases the key was lost, or the fable had wandered so far from its primary sense, as to refuse all rational interpretation; and where the truth had been less encumbered with fiction, it came forth cold and inanimate: the philosopher could strip off the splendid robes in which the moral or religious doctrine had been disguised, but he could not instil into it the breath of life. The imagination refused the unnatural alliance of cold and calculating reason; and the religious feeling, when it saw the old deities reduced into ingenious allegories, sank into apathy; or vaguely yearned for some new excitement, which it knew not from what quarter to expect.

The last hopes of the ancient religion lay in the Mysteries. Of them alone the writers, about the time of the appearance of Christianity, speak with uniform reverence, if not with awe. They alone could bestow happiness in life, and hope in death (3). In

A later writer complains—*Aliquantum pari libidine in celestium numerum referuntur, ægre exequiis digni.* Aur. Victor. Caesar, in Gallieno. M. Ranke, in the first chapter of whose admirable work (*die Römischen Papste*) I am not displeased to find some coincidences of view, even of expression, with my own, seems to think that much of the strength of the old religion lay in the worship of the emperor. I am not disposed to think so ill of human nature.

(1) Cicero, no doubt, speaks the language of many of the more elevated minds when he states that he took refuge in philosophy from the afflictions of life at that dark period of civil convention. *Hortata etiam est, ut me ad hæc conferrem, animi ægritudo, magnâ et gravi commota injuriâ: cujus si majorem aliquam levationem reperire po-*

tuissem, non ad hæc potissimum confugissem. *De Nat. Deor. i. 4.*

(2) *Πραγματῶν ὑπ' ἀνθρωπίνης ἀσθενείας οὐ καθοραμέναν παρῶς εὐσχημονέστερος ἑρμηνεύς ὁ μῦθος.* Max. Tyr., *Dissert. X.* The whole essay is intended to prove that poetry and philosophy held the same doctrine about the gods. This process, it should be observed, though it had already commenced, was not carried to its height until philosophy and polytheism coalesced again, from the sense of their common danger, and endeavoured to array a system composed of the most rational and attractive parts of both, against the encroachments of Christianity.

(3) *Neque solum cum lætitiâ vivendi rationem accepimus, sed etiam cum spe meliore moriendi,*

these remarkable rites (1) the primitive Nature-worship had survived under a less refined and less humanized form; the original and more simple symbolic forms (those of the first agricultural inhabitants of Greece (2)) had been retained by ancient reverence: as its allegory was less intricate and obscure (3), it accommodated itself better with the advancing spirit of the age. It may indeed be questioned whether the Mysteries did not owe much of their influence to their secrecy, and to the impressive forms, under which they shadowed forth their more recondite truths (4). These, if they did not satisfy, yet kept the mind in a state of progressive and continued excitement. They were, if it may be so said, a great religious drama, in which the initiated were at once spectators and actors; where the fifth act was designedly delayed to the utmost possible point, and of this still suspended catastrophe, the dramatis personæ, the only audience, were kept in studied ignorance (5). The Mysteries had, perhaps, from an early period associated a moral (6) purport with their sacred shows; and with the progress of opinion, the moral would more and more predominate over the primitive religious meaning (7). Yet the morality of the Mysteries was apparently that of the ancient Nature-worship of the East. It taught the immortality of the soul, as a part of that vast system of nature, which, emanating from the Supreme Being, passed through a long course of deterioration or refinement, and at length returned and resolved itself into the primal source of all existence. But the Mysteries, from their very nature, could only act upon the public mind in a limited manner (8): directly they ceased to be mysteries they lost their power (9). Nor can it be

Cic. de Leg. ii. 14. The theory of Warburton on the Mysteries is now universally exploded; but neither, with the utmost deference to his erudition, can I enter altogether into the views of Lobeck. In my judgment his quotations do not bear him out, as to the publicity of the ceremonies; nor can I conceive that there was none, or scarcely any, secret.

— Vetabo qui Cereris sacrum

Vulgarit arcanæ, sub iisdem

Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecum

Solvat phaselum. Hor. Carm. iii. 2.

(1) The theories of Maier, Warburton, Plessing, Boulanger, Dupuis, Meiners, Villoison, P. Knight, Heeren, St. Croix, Creuzer, may be found briefly stated, Lobeck, l. 6. 8.

(2) Quibus explicatis, ad rationemque revocatis, rerum magis natura cognoscitur, quam deorum. Cic. de Nat. Deor. i. 42.

(3) See Varro's View of the Eleusinian Mysteries, preserved by Augustin, De Civ. Dei, vii. 15.

(4) Ἀγνοῖα σιμνότης, ἐπὶ τελετῶν καὶ νύξ. διὰ τοῦτο πιστεύεται τὰ μυστήρια, καὶ ἄλλα σήληα διὰ τοῦτο ὀρύττειν, καιροὶ καὶ τόποι κρύπτειν εἰδότες ἀρρητοῦργίαν ἐνθεον. Synes. de Prov. Compare the splendid passage in Dio. Chrys. Orat. 12.

(5) Non semel quædam sacra traduntur. Eleusis servat, quod ostendat revisentibus. Rerum

natura, sacra sua non simul tradit. Initiatos nos credimus: in vestibulo ejus hæremus. Sen. Nat. Quæst. vii. 31. Ut opinionem suspensio cognitionis ædificet, atque ita tantam inajestatem adhibere videantur, quantum præstruxerunt cupiditatem. Tert. ad. Valent. c. 1.

(6) Pindar, Frag. 116. Sophocles. Fragm. Luc. LVIII. Isoc. Pan. VII. Plato, Men.

(7) Even Lobeck allows this of the Eleusinian Mysteries—Sacerdotes interdum aliquid de mætempyschosi dixisse largiar." i. 73.

(8) The Jews were forbidden to be initiated in the Mysteries. In the Greek text of the LXX, a text was interpolated or mistranslated (Deut. xxiii. 17.), in which Moses, by an anachronism not uncommon in the Alexandrian school, was made distinctly to condemn these peculiar rites of paganism.

(9) Philo demands why, if they are so useful, they are not public: "Nature makes all her most beautiful and splendid works, her heaven and all her stars for the sight of all; her seas, fountains, and rivers, the annual temperature of the air, and the winds, the innumerable tribes and races of animals, and fruits of the earth, for the common use of man—why then are the Mysteries confined to a few, and those not always the most wise and most virtuous?" This is the general sense of a long passage, vol. ii. p. 260. Ed. Mang.



doubted, that while the local and public Mysteries, particularly the greatest of all, the Eleusinian, were pure and undefiled by licentiousness, and, if they retained any of the obscene symbols, disguised or kept them in the back ground; the private and moveable mysteries, which, under the conduct of vagabond priests, were continually flowing in from the East, displayed those symbols in unblushing nakedness, and gave occasion for the utmost licence and impurity (1).

Philoso-  
phy.

II. Philosophy as a substitute for religion was still more manifestly deficient. For, in the first place, it was unable, or condescended not, to reach the body of the people, whom the progress of civilisation was slowly bringing up towards the common level; and where it found or sought proselytes, it spoke without authority, and distracted with the multitude of its conflicting sects the patient but bewildered inquirer (2). Philosophy maintained the aristocratic tone, which, while it declared that to a few elect spirits alone it was possible to communicate the highest secrets of knowledge, more particularly the mystery of the great Supreme Being, proclaimed it vain and unwise to attempt to elevate the many to such exalted speculations (3). "The Father of the worlds," says Plato in this tone, "it is difficult to discover, and, when discovered, it "is impossible to make him known to all." So, observes a German historian of Christianity, think the Brahmins of India. Plato might aspire to the creation of an imaginary republic, which, if it could possibly be realised, might stand alone, an unapproachable model of the physical and moral perfection of man; but the amelioration of the whole world, the simultaneous elevation of all nations, orders, and classes to a higher degree of moral advancement, would have been a vision from which even his imagination would have shrunk in despair. This remained to be conceived and accomplished by one who appeared to the mass of mankind in his own age, as a peasant of Palestine.

Varieties  
of philo-  
sophic  
systems.

It cannot be denied that, to those whom it deigned to address, philosophy was sufficiently accommodating; and whatever the bias of the individual mind, the school was open, and the teacher at hand, to lead the inquirer, either to the luxurious gardens of Epicurus, or among the loftier spirits of the Porch. In the two prevalent systems of philosophy, the Epicurean and the Stoic, appears a striking assimilation to the national character of the two predomi-

(1) The republic severely prohibited these practices, which were unknown in its earlier and better days. Dionys. Hal. ii. viii.

(2) Ὅρας τὸ πλῆθος τῶν συνθήματων; πῇ τις τράπηται; ποῖον αὐτῶν κατελέξομεν; τίνι πεισθῶ τῶν παραγγελμάτων; Max. Tyr. xxxv. sub tin.

(3) Neander has likewise quoted several of the same authorities adduced in the following pas-

sage. See the translation of Neander, which had not been announced when the above was written. It is curious that Strabo remarks, on another point, the similarity of the Indian opinions to Platonism, and treats them all as μύθοι: — Παραπλήκουσι δὲ καὶ μύθους, ὥσπερ καὶ Πλάτων, περὶ τε ἀθανασίας ψυχῆς, καὶ τῶν καθ' ἄδου κρίσεων καὶ ἀλλὰ τοιαῦτα. l. xv. p. 713.



nant races which constituted the larger part of the Roman world. The Epicurean, with its subtle metaphysics, its abstract notion of the Deity, its imaginative materialism, its milder and more pleasurable morals, and perhaps its propensity to degenerate into indolence and sensuality, was kindred and congenial to that of Greece, and the Grecian part of the Roman society. The Stoic, with its more practical character, its mental strength and self-confidence, its fatalism, its universally diffused and all-governing Deity, the soul of the universe (of which the political power of the all-ruling republic might appear an image), bore the same analogy to that of Rome. While the more profound thinkers, who could not disguise from themselves the insufficiency of the grounds on which the philosophical systems rested, either settled into a calm and contented scepticism, or with the Academics, formed an eclectic creed from what appeared the better parts of the rest.

Epicureanism accordant to Greek character;

Stoicism to Roman.

Academies.

Such on all the great questions of religion, the divine nature, providence, the origin and future state of the soul (1), was the floating and uncertain state of the human mind. In the department of morals, Philosophy nobly performed her part; but perhaps her success in this respect more clearly displayed her inefficiency. The height to which moral science was carried in the works of Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Antoninus, while it made the breach still wider between the popular religion and the advanced state of the human mind, more vividly displayed the want of a faith, which would associate itself with the purest and loftiest morality; and re-marry, as it were, those thoughts and feelings, which connect man with a future state of being, to the practical duties of life (2).

For while these speculations occupied the loftier and more thinking minds, what remained for the vulgar of the higher and of the lower orders? Philosophy had shaken the old edifice to its base; and even if it could have confined its more profound and secret doctrines within the circle of its own elect, if its contempt for the old fables of the popular creed had been more jealously guarded, it is impossible but that the irreligion of the upper order must work downwards upon the lower. When religion has, if not avowedly, yet manifestly, sunk into an engine of state policy, its most imposing and solemn rites will lose all their commanding life and energy. Actors will perform ill who do not feel their parts. "It is marvellous," says the Epicurean in Cicero, "that one soothsayer (Ha-

Philosophy fatal to popular Religion.

(1) Augustin speaking of the great work of Varro concludes thus: — *In hac tota serie pulcherrima et subtilissima disputationis, vitam æternam frustra queri et sperari, facillime apparet.* *Civ. Dei*, vi. 3.

(2) Gibbon and many other writers (*Law, Theory of Religion*, 127. 130.; *Sunner, Evidence*, p. 76.) have adduced the well-known passages from Sallust and Cicero, which indicate the general state of feeling on the great question

of the immortality of the soul. There is a striking passage in a writer, whose works have lately come to light through the industry of Angelo Mai. The author is endeavouring to find consolation for the loss of a favourite grandson: *Si maxime esse animas immortales constet, erit hoc philosophis disserendi argumentum, non parentibus desiderandi remedium.* *Front. de Nep. Amiss.*

ruspex), can look another in the face without laughing." And when the Epicurean himself stood before the altar, in the remarkable language of Plutarch, "he hypocritically enacted prayer and adoration from fear of the many; he uttered words directly opposite to his philosophy. While he sacrifices, the ministering priest seems to him no more than a cook, and he departs uttering the line of Menander, "I have sacrificed to Gods in whom I have no concern (1)."

Literature.

Unless indeed the literature as well as the philosophy of the age, immediately preceding Christianity, had been confined to the intellectual aristocracy, the reasoning spirit, which rejected with disdain the old imaginative fables, could not but descend at least as low as the rudiments of liberal education. When the gravest writers, like Polybius and Strabo, find it necessary to apologise to their more learned and thinking readers, for the introduction of those mythic legends, which formed the creed of their ancestors, and to plead the necessity of avoiding offence, because such tales are still sacred among the vulgar, this deference shows rather the increasing indifference, than the strength of popular opinion. "Historians," says the former writer, "must be pardoned, if for the sake of maintaining piety among the many, they occasionally introduce miraculous or fabulous tales; but they must not be permitted on these points to run into extravagance." "Religion," he declares in another passage, "would perhaps be unnecessary in a commonwealth of wise men. But since the multitude is ever fickle, full of lawless desires, irrational passions and violence, it is right to restrain it by the fear of the invisible world, and such tragic terrors. Whence our ancestors appear to have introduced notions concerning the Gods, and opinions about the infernal regions not rashly or without consideration. Those rather act rashly and inconsiderately who would expel them (2)." "It is impossible," observes the inquiring geographer, "to govern a mob of women, or the whole mixed multitude, by philosophic reasoning, and to exhort them to piety, holiness, and faith; we must also employ superstition with its fables and prodigies. For the thunder, the ægis, the trident, the torches, the serpents, the thyrsi of the Gods are fables, as is all the ancient theology; but the legislature introduced these things as bugbears to those who are children in understanding (3)." In short even when the Roman writers professed the utmost respect for the religious institutions of their country, there was a kind of silent protest against their sincerity. It was an evident, frequently an avowed, condescension to the prejudices of the vulgar. Livy admires the wisdom of Numa, who introduced the fear of the Gods,

(1) Quoted also by Neander from Plutarch. (Non poss. suav. viv. sec. Epic.) I have adopted Reiske's reading of the latter clause.

(2) Polyb. vi. 56.

(3) Strabo, lib. i. p. 19.

as a "most efficacious means of controlling an ignorant and barbarous populace (1)." Even the serious Dionysius judges of religion according to its usefulness, not according to its truth, as the wise scheme of the legislator, rather than as the revelation of the Deity (2). Pausanias, while he is making a kind of religious survey of Greece, expressing a grave veneration for all the temples and rites of antiquity, frequently relating the miraculous intervention of the several deities (3), is jealous and careful lest he should be considered a believer in the fables which he relates (4). The natural consequence of this double doctrine was not unforeseen. "What," says the Academic in Cicero, "when men maintain all belief in the immortal Gods to have been invented by wise men for the good of the state, that religion might lead to their duty those who would not be led by reason, do they not sweep away the very foundations of all religion (5)?"

The mental childhood of the human race was passing away, at least it had become wearied of its old toy (6). The education itself, by which, according to these generally judicious writers, the youthful mind was to be impregnated with reverential feelings for the objects of national worship, must have been coldly conducted by teachers conscious that they were practising a pious fraud upon their disciples, and perpetually embarrassed by the necessity of maintaining the gravity befitting such solemn subjects, and of suppressing the involuntary smile, which might betray the secret of their own impiety. One class of fables seems to have been universally exploded even in the earliest youth, those which related to another life. The picture of the unrivalled satirist may be overcharged, but it corresponds strictly with the public language of the orator, and the private sentence of the philosopher :

Future  
Life.

The silent realm of disembodied ghosts,  
The frogs that croak along the Stygian coasts ;  
The thousand souls in one crazed vessel steer'd,  
Not boys believe, save boys without a beard (7).

Even the religious Pausanias speaks of the immortality of the soul as a foreign doctrine, introduced by the Chaldeans and the Magi,

(1) H. R. i. 19.

(2) Ant. Rom. ii. 8, 9.

(3) Boeotica, 25.; Laconica, 4.

(4) Τοῦτον τὸν λόγον, καὶ ὅσα εἰκότα εἴρηται, οὐκ ἀποδεχόμενος γράφω, γράφω δὲ οὐδέν ποσον. Corinth. xvii. In another place he repeats that he gives the popular legend as he finds it. Arcad. viii.

(5) De Nat. Deor. i. 42.

(6) Gibbon has a striking sentence in his juvenile Essay sur la Littérature (Misc. Works, iv. 61.): "Les Romains étaient éclairés : cependant ces mêmes Romains ne furent pas choqués de voir réunir dans la personne de César un dieu,

un prêtre, et un athée." He adds atheist, as disbelieving with the Epicureans the providence of God.

(7) Esse aliquid manes et subterranea regna,  
Et contum, et Stygio ranas in gurgite nigras;  
Atque una transire vadum tot millia cymba.  
Nec pueri credunt nisi qui nondum ære lavantur.  
Pro Sat. ii. 149.

Nisi forte ineptis ac fabulis ducimur, ut existimemus apud inferos impiorum supplicia perferre \*\*\* quæ si falsa sunt, id quod oranes intelligent.—Cic. Pro Cluent. c. 61. Nemo tam puer est ut Cerberum timeat, et tenebras et larvarum habitum nudis ossibus colloquentem. Mors nos aut consumit aut emittit. Sen. Ep. 24.



and embraced by some of the Greeks, particularly by Plato (1). Pliny, whose *Natural History* opens with a declaration that the universe is the sole Deity, devotes a separate chapter to a contemptuous exposure of the idle notion of the immortality of the soul, as a vision of human pride, and equally absurd, whether under the form of existence in another sphere, or under that of transmigration (2).

Recep-  
tion of  
Foreign  
Religions.

We return then again to the question, what remained for minds thus enlightened beyond the poetic faith of their ancestors, yet not ripe for philosophy? how was the craving for religious excitement to be appeased, which turned with dissatisfaction or disgust from its accustomed nutriment? Here is the secret of the remarkable union between the highest reason and the most abject superstition which characterises the age of Imperial Rome. Every foreign religion found proselytes in the capital of the world; not only the pure and rational theism of the Jews, which had made a progress, the extent of which it is among the most difficult questions in history to estimate : but the Oriental rites of Phrygia, and the Isiac and Serapic worship of Egypt, which, in defiance of the edict of the magistrate (3) and the scorn of the philosopher, maintained their ground in the capital, and were so widely propagated among the provinces, that their vestiges may be traced in the remote districts of Gaul (4) and Britain (5); and at a later period the reviving Mithriac Mysteries, which in the same manner made their way into the western provinces of the empire (6). In the capital itself, every thing that was new, or secret, or imposing, found a welcome reception among a people that listened with indifference to philosophers who reasoned, and poets who embodied philosophy in the most attractive diction. For in Rome, poetry had forsworn the alliance of the old imaginative faith. The irreligious system of Euhemerus (7) had found a translator in Ennius; that of Epicurus was commended by the unrivalled powers of Lucretius. Virgil himself, who, as he collected from all quarters the beauties of ancient poetry, so he inlaid in his splendid tessellation the noblest images of the poetic faith of Greece : yet, though at one moment he transfuses mythology into his stately verse, with all the fire of an ardent votary, at

Poetry  
ceases  
to be  
religious.

(1) *Messeniacæ*, c. xxxii.

(2) *Lib. vii.* 55.

(3) See *antè*, p. 7.

(4) As late as the time of Julian, the son of a German king had changed his barbarous name of Agerario for that of Serapion, having been instructed in certain Mysteries in Gaul. *Amm. Marcell. xvi.* c. 12.

(5) I have been informed that in some recent excavations at York, vestiges of Isiac worship have been discovered.

(6) *Religions de l'Antiquité*, i. 363.; and note, p. 743.

(7) Euhemerus either of Messina in Sicily or of Messene in Peloponnesus (he lived in the time

of Cassander king of Macedon), was of the Cyrenaic school of philosophy, and was employed on a voyage to the Red Sea by Cassander. But he was still more celebrated for his theologic innovation : he pretended to have discovered during this voyage on an island in the Eastern Ocean, called Panchaia, a register of the births and deaths of the gods inscribed on a golden column in the temple of the Triphylian Jupiter. Hence he inferred that all the popular deities were mere mortals deified on account of their fame, or their benefactions to the human race. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. i.* 42. *Plut. de Isid. et Osir.* p. 424. *Brucker*, i. 604

the next he appears as a pantheist, and describes the Deity but as the animating soul of the universe (1). An occasional fit of superstition crosses over the careless and Epicurean apathy of Horace (2). Astrology and witchcraft (3) led captive minds, which boasted themselves emancipated from the idle terrors of the avenging gods. In the *Pharsalia* of Lucan, which manifestly soars far above the vulgar theology, where the lofty Stoicism elevates the brave man who disdains, above the gods who flatter, the rising fortunes of Cæsar; yet in the description of the witch Erichtho evoking the dead (the only purely imaginative passage in the whole rhetorical poem), there is a kind of tremendous truth and earnestness, which show that if the poet himself believed not "the magic wonders which he drew," at least he well knew the terrors that would strike the age in which he wrote.

The old established traders in human credulity had almost lost their occupation, but their place was supplied by new empirics, who swarmed from all quarters. The oracles were silent, while astrology seized the administration of the secrets of futurity. Pompey, and Crassus, and Cæsar, all consulted the Chaldeans (4), whose flattering predictions that they should die in old age, in their homes, in glory, so belied by their miserable fates, still brought not the unblushing science into disrepute. The repeated edicts which expelled the astrologers and "mathematicians" from Rome, was no less an homage to their power over the public mind, than their recall, the tacit permission to return, or the return in defiance of the insulted edict. Banished by Agrippa (5), by Augustus (6), by Tiberius (7), by Claudius (8), they are described in the inimitable language of Tacitus, as a race who, treacherous to those in power, fallacious to those who hope for power, are ever proscribed, yet will ever remain (9). They were at length taken under the avowed patronage of Vespasian and his successors (10). All these circumstances were manifest indications of the decay, and of the approaching dissolution of the old religion. The elegiac poet had read, not without sagacity, the signs of the times.

None sought the aid of foreign gods, while bow'd  
Before their native shrines the trembling crowd (11).

(1) *Æn.* vi. 724. According to his life by Donatus Virgil was an Epicurean.

(2) *Insanientis dum sapientie  
Consultus erio, nunc retrorsum  
Vela dare, atque iterare cursus  
Cogor relictos.*

And this because he heard thunder at noon-day.

(3) See the *Canidia* of Horace. According to Gibbon's just criticism, a "vulgar witch," the Erichtho of Lucan, is "tedious, disgusting, but sometimes sublime." Note, ch. xxv. vol. iv. p. 239. It is the difference between the weird sisters in *Macbeth* and Middleton's "Witch," excepting of course the prolixity of Lucan.

(4) *Chaldeis sed major erit fiducia, quicquid  
Dixerit astrologus, credent de fonte relatum  
Hammonis; quoniam Delphis oracula cessant,  
Et genus humanum damnat caligo futuri.*  
Juv. vi. 553.

(5) *Dio.* xlix. c. 43.

(6) *Dio.* lvi. c. 25.

(7) *Tac. Ann.* ii. 32.

(8) *Tac. Ann.* xii. 52.

(9) *Genus hominum, potentibus infidum, sperantibus fallax, quod in civitate nostra et vetabitur semper et retinebitur.* *Tac. Hist.* i. 22.

(10) *Tac. Hist.* ii. 78. *Suet. in Vesp. Dio.* lxxviii. *Suet. in Dom.* xiv. xv.

(11) *Nulli cura fuit externos querere Divos,  
Cum tremet patio pendula turba foro.*  
*PROB.* iv. l. 17.

And thus, in this struggle between the old household deities of the established faith, and the half domiciliated gods of the stranger, undermined by philosophy, supplanted by still darker superstition, Polytheism seemed, as it were, to await its death-blow; and to be ready to surrender its ancient honours to the conqueror, whom Divine Providence should endow with sufficient authority over the human mind to seize upon the abdicated supremacy.

Revolu-  
tion effect-  
ed by  
Christi-  
anity.

Such is the state in which the ancient world leaves the mind of man. On a sudden a new era commences; a rapid yet gradual revolution takes place in the opinions, sentiments, and principles of mankind; the void is filled; the connection between religion and morals re-established with an intimacy of union yet unknown. The unity of the Deity becomes, not the high and mysterious creed of a privileged sacerdotal or intellectual oligarchy, but the common property of all whose minds are fitted to receive it: all religious distinctions are annihilated; the jurisdictions of all local deities abolished; and imperceptibly the empire of Rome becomes one great Christian commonwealth, which even sends out, as it were, its peaceful colonies into regions beyond the limits of the Imperial power. The characteristic distinction of the general revolution is this, that the physical agency of the Deity seems to recede from the view, while the spiritual character is more distinctly unfolded; or rather, the notion of the Divine Power is merged in the more prevailing sentiment of his moral Goodness. The remarkable passage in the Jewish history, in which God is described as revealing himself to Elijah, "neither in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice," may be considered, we will not say prophetic, but singularly significant of the sensations to be excited in the human mind by the successive revelations of the Deity.

Immortal-  
ity of the  
soul.

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul partook in the same change with the notion of the Deity; it became at once popular, simple, and spiritual. It was disseminated throughout all orders of society: it admitted no aristocratic elysium of heroes and demigods, like that of the early Greeks (1); it separated itself from that earlier and widely prevalent form, which it assumed in the theogonies of the Nature-worship, where the soul emanating from the source of Being, after one or many transmigrations, was re-

Propertius may be considered in one sense the most religious poet of this period: his verses teem with mythological allusion, but it is poetical ornament rather than the natural language of piety; it has much of the artificial school of the Alexandrian Callimachus, his avowed model, nothing of the simplicity of faith which breathed in Pindar and Sophocles.

(1) It is curious to see, in another mythology, the same martial aristocratic spirit which, in the earlier religions, excluded the ἀμύθητα

καρπυα, the inglorious vulgar, from the seats of bliss, where Achilles and Diomed pursued their warlike amusements. It was not proper to appear poor before Odin; and it is very doubtful whether a poor man was thought worthy of any place in his dwellings, unless he came from the field of battle in the bloody train of some great chieftain. Slaves at least were distinctly excluded, and after death turned away from the doors of Valhalla. Geijer, Hist. of Sweden, Germ. Transl. i. 103.



absorbed into the Divine Essence. It announced the resurrection of all mankind to judgment, and the re-union of the spirit to a body, which, preserving the principle of identity, nevertheless should be of a purer and more imperishable nature. Such are the great primary principles, which became incorporated with the mind of man; and, operating on all human institutions, on the common sentiments of the whole race, form the great distinctive difference between the ancient and the modern, the European and the Asiatic world. During the dark ages there was a strong reaction of barbarism: in its outward form Christianity might appear to recede towards the polytheism of older times; and, as has been shown, not in a philosophic, but in a narrow polemic spirit of hostility to the Church of Rome, many of the rites and usages of heathenism were admitted into the Christian system; yet the indelible difference between the two periods remained. A higher sense and meaning was infused into these forms; God was considered in his moral rather than his physical attributes—as the Lord of the future as much or even more than of the present world. The saints and angels, who have been compared to the intermediate deities of the older superstitions, had, nevertheless, besides their tutelar power against immediate accidents and temporal calamities, an important influence over the state of the soul in the world to come; they assumed the higher office of ministering the hopes of the future, in a still greater degree than the blessings of the present life.

To the more complete development of this fact we shall descend in the course of our history, which will endeavour to trace all the modifications of Christianity, by which it accommodated itself to the spirit of successive ages; and by this apparently almost skilful, but in fact necessary condescension to the predominant state of moral culture, of which itself formed a constituent element, maintained its uninterrupted dominion. It is the author's object, the difficulty of which he himself fully appreciates, to portray the genius of the Christianity of each successive age, in connection with that of the age itself; entirely to discard all polemic views; to mark the origin and progress of all the subordinate diversities of belief; their origin in the circumstances of the place or time at which they appeared; their progress from their adaptation to the prevailing state of opinion or sentiment: rather than directly to confute error or to establish truth; in short, to exhibit the reciprocal influence of civilisation on Christianity, of Christianity on civilisation. To the accomplishment of such a scheme he is well aware, that besides the usual high qualifications of a faithful historian, is requisite, in an especial manner, the union of true philosophy with perfect charity, if indeed they are not one and the same. This calm, impartial, and dispassionate tone he will constantly endeavour, he

Design  
of this  
History.

Christian-  
ity differ-  
ent in  
form in  
different  
periods of  
civilisa-  
tion.

dares scarcely hope, with such warnings on every side of involuntary prejudice and unconscious prepossession, uniformly to maintain. In the honesty of his purpose he will seek his excuse for all imperfection or deficiency in the execution of his scheme. Nor is he aware that he enters on ground pre-occupied by any writers of established authority, at least in our own country, where the History of Christianity has usually assumed the form of a History of the Church, more or less controversial, and confined itself to annals of the internal feuds and divisions in the Christian community, and the variations in doctrine and discipline, rather than to its political and social influence. Our attention, on the other hand, will be chiefly directed to its effects on the social and even political condition of man, as it extended itself throughout the Roman world, and at length entered into the administration of government and of law; the gradual manner in which it absorbed and incorporated into the religious commonwealth the successive masses of population, which, after having overthrown the temporal polity of Rome, were subdued to the religion of the conquered people; the separation of the human race into the distinct castes of the clergy and laity; the former at first an aristocracy, afterwards a despotic monarchy: as Europe sank back into barbarism, the imaginative state of the human mind, the formation of a new poetic faith, a mythology, and a complete system of symbolic worship; the interworking of Christianity with barbarism, till they slowly grew into a kind of semi-barbarous heroic period, that of Christian chivalry; the gradual expansion of the system, with the expansion of the human mind; and the slow, perhaps not yet complete, certainly not general, development of a rational and intellectual religion. Throughout his work the author will equally, or as his disposition inclines, even more diligently, labour to show the good as well as the evil of each phasis of Christianity; since it is his opinion that, at every period, much more is to be attributed to the circumstances of the age, to the collective operation of certain principles which grew out of the events of the time, than to the intentional or accidental influence of any individual or class of men. Christianity, in short, may exist in a certain form in a nation of savages as well as in a nation of philosophers, yet its specific character will almost entirely depend upon the character of the people who are its votaries (1). It must be considered, therefore, in constant connection with that character: it will darken with the darkness and brighten with the light of each succeeding century; in an ungenial time it will recede so far from its genuine and essential nature as scarcely to retain any

(1) By the accounts of Bruce, Salt, and recently of Pearce, the Christianity of Abyssinia may be adduced as an instance of the state to which it may be degraded among a people at a very low state of barbarism. The conversion-

among the South Sea islanders, it will of course be remembered, were effected, and are still superintended by strangers in a very different stage of civilisation.

sign of its divine original : it will advance with the advancement of human nature, and keep up the moral to the utmost height of the intellectual culture of man.

While, however, Christianity necessarily submitted to all these modifications, I strongly protest against the opinion, that the *origin* of the religion can be attributed, according to a theory adopted by many foreign writers, to the gradual and spontaneous development of the human mind (1). Christ is as much beyond his own age, as his own age is beyond the darkest barbarism. The time, though fitted to receive, could not by any combination of prevalent opinions, or by any conceivable course of moral improvement, have *produced* Christianity. The conception of the human character of Jesus, and the simple principles of the new religion, as they were in direct opposition to the predominant opinions and temper of his own countrymen, so they stand completely alone in the history of our race; and, as imaginary no less than as real, altogether transcend the powers of man's moral conception. Supposing the gospels purely fictitious, or that, like the "Cyropædia" of Xenophon, they embody on a groundwork of fact the highest moral and religious notions to which man had attained, and show the utmost ideal perfection of the divine and human nature, they can be accounted for, according to my judgment, on none of the ordinary principles of human nature (2). When we behold Christ standing in the midst of the wreck of old religious institutions, and building, or rather at one word commanding to arise, the simple and harmonious structure of the new faith, which seems equally adapted for all ages—a temple to which nations in the highest degree of civilisation may bring their offerings of pure hearts, virtuous dispositions, universal charity,—our natural emotion is the recognition of the Divine goodness, in the promulgation of this beneficent code of religion; and adoration of that Being in whom that Divine goodness is thus embodied and made comprehensible to the faculties of man. In the language of the apostle, "God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself (3)."

Christian-  
ity not  
self-deve-  
loped.

(1) This theory is sketched by no means with an unfair though unfriendly hand by Chateaubriand, *Études sur l'Histoire*; a book of which, I am constrained to add, the meagre performance contrasts strangely with the loftiness of its pretensions.

(2) Dirons-nous que l'histoire de l'Évangile est inventée à plaisir? Ce n'est pas ainsi qu'on invente : et les faits de Socrate, dont personne ne doute, sont bien moins attestés que ceux de Je-

sus-Christ. Au fond c'est reculer la difficulté sans la détruire; il seroit plus inconcevable que plusieurs hommes d'accord eussent fabriqué ce livre, qu'il ne l'est qu'un seul en a fourni le sujet. Et l'Évangile a des caractères de vérité si frappans, si parfaitement inimitables, que l'inventeur en seroit plus étonnant que le héros. Rousseau, *Emile*, liv. iv.

(3) 2 Cor. v. 19.



## CHAPTER II.

LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST.—STATE OF JUDEA.—THE BELIEF IN THE MESSIAH.

Life of  
Christ ne-  
cessary to  
a history  
of Christi-  
anity.

THE history of Christianity without the life of its Divine Author appears imperfect and incomplete, particularly considering the close connection of that life, not only with the more mysterious doctrines, but with the practical, and even political influence of the religion; for even its apparently most unimportant incidents have, in many cases, affected most deeply the opinions and feelings of the Christian world. The isolation of the history of Christ in a kind of sacred seclusion has no doubt a beneficial effect on the piety of the Christian, which delights in contemplating the Saviour, undisturbed and uncontaminated by less holy associations; but it has likewise its disadvantages, in disconnecting his life from the general history of mankind, of which it forms an integral and essential part. Had the life of Christ been more generally considered as intimately and inseparably connected with the progress and development of human affairs, with the events and opinions of his time, works would not have been required to prove his existence, scarcely perhaps the authenticity of his history. The real historical evidence of Christianity is the absolute necessity of his life, to fill up the void in the annals of mankind, to account for the effects of his religion in the subsequent history of man.

Its diffi-  
culty.

Yet to write the life of Christ, though at first sight it may appear the most easy, is perhaps the most difficult task which an historian can undertake. Many Lives have been composed with a devotional, none at least to my knowledge, in this country (1), with an historic design; none in which the author has endeavoured to throw himself completely back into the age, when Jesus of Nazareth began to travel as the teacher of a new religion through the villages of Galilee; none which has attempted to keep up a perpetual reference to the circumstances of the times, the habits and national character of the people, and the state of public feeling; and thus, identifying itself with the past, to show the origin and progress of the new faith, as it slowly developed itself, and won its way through the adverse elements, which it encountered in Judea and the adjacent provinces. To depart from the evangelic simplicity in the relation of the facts would not merely offend the reverential feelings of the reader, but tend likewise to destroy the remarkable harmony between the facts and doctrines, which characterises the narrative of the Gospels, and on which their authenticity, as genuine historical

(1) See Appendix I., on the recent Lives of Christ.

documents, might to an intelligent mind be safely rested. The three first Gospels, unless written at a very early period, could scarcely have escaped the controversial, or at least argumentative tone, which enters into the later Christian writings, and with which the relation of St. John is imbued (1). The plan then which the author will pursue, will be to presume, to a certain degree, on the reader's acquaintance with the subject on which he enters: he will not think it necessary to relate at length all the discourses or even all the acts of Christ, but rather to interweave the historic illustration with the main events, disposed, as far as possible, in the order of time, and to trace the effect which each separate incident, and the whole course of the life of Jesus, may be supposed to have produced upon the popular mind. In short it will partake, in some degree, of the nature of an historical comment, on facts which it will rather endeavour to elucidate, than to draw out to their full length.

The days of the elder Herod were drawing to a close; his prosperous and magnificent reign was ending in darkness and misery, such as the deepest tragedy has rarely ventured to imagine. His last years had revealed the horrible, the humiliating secret, that the son, at whose instigation he had put to death the two noble and popular princes, his children by Mariamne the Asmonean, had almost all his life been over-reaching him in that dark policy, of which he esteemed himself the master; and now, as a final return for his unsuspecting confidence, had conspired to cut short the brief remainder of his days. Almost the last, and the most popular exercise of Herod's royal authority, was to order the execution of the perfidious Antipater. Fearful times! when the condemnation of a son by a father, and that father an odious and sanguinary tyrant, could coincide with the universal sentiment of the people! The attachment of the nation to the reigning family might have been secured, if the sons of Mariamne, the heiress of the Asmonean line, had survived to claim the succession: the foreign and Idumean origin of the father might have been forgotten in the national and splendid descent of the mother. There was, it should seem, a powerful Herodian party, attached to the fortunes of the ruling house; but the body of the nation now looked with ill-concealed aversion to the perpetuation of the Idumean tyranny in the persons of the sons of Herod. Yet to those who contemplated only the political signs of the times, nothing remained but the degrading alternative, either to submit to the line of Herod, or to sink into a Roman province. Such was to be the end of their long ages of national glory, such the hopeless termination of the national independence. But, notwithstanding the progress of Grecian opinions and manners, with which the politic Herod had endeavoured to

State of  
Judea.—  
Herod the  
Great.

Intrigues  
and death  
of Anti-  
pater

Sons of  
Herod.

counterbalance the turbulent and unruly spirit of the religious party, the great mass of the people, obstinately wedded to the law and the institutions of their fathers, watched with undisguised jealousy the denationalising proceedings of their king. This stern and inextinguishable enthusiasm had recently broken out into active resistance, in the conspiracy to tear down the golden eagle, which Herod had suspended over the gate of the temple (1). The signal for this daring act had been a rumour of the king's death; and the terrific vengeance, which, under a temporary show of moderation, Herod had wreaked on the offenders, the degradation of the high-priest, and the execution of the popular teachers, who were accused of having instigated the insurrection, could not but widen the breach between the dying sovereign and the people. The greater part of the nation looked to the death of Herod with a vague hope of liberation and independence, which struck in with the more peculiar cause of excitement predominant in the general mind.

General  
expecta-  
tion of the  
Messiah.

For the principle of this universal ferment lay deeper than in the impatience of a tyrannical government, which burdened the people with intolerable exactions, or the apprehension of national degradation, if Judæa should be reduced to the dominion of a Roman proconsul: it was the confidence in the immediate coming of the *Messiah*, which was working with vague and mysterious agitation in the hearts of all orders (2). The very danger to which Jewish independence was reduced, was associated with this exalted sentiment; the nearer the ruin, the nearer the restoration of their Theocracy. For there is no doubt, that among other predictions, according to the general belief, which pointed to the present period, a very ancient interpretation of the prophecy, which declared that the sceptre, the royal dominion, should not depart from the race of Israel, until the coming of the Shiloh, one of the titles uniformly attributed to the Messiah, connected the termination of the existing polity with the manifestation of the Deliverer (3). This expectation of a wonderful revolution to be wrought (4) by the sudden appearance of some great mysterious person, had been so widely disseminated, as to excite the astonishment, perhaps the jealousy of the

(1) Hist. of the Jews, vol. ii. p. 124.

(2) Whoever is curious in such inquiries, will find a fearful catalogue of calamities, which were to precede, according to the Rabbinical authorities, the coming of the Messiah, either in Lightfoot's Harmony, vol. v. p. 180. (8vo. edit.), or in Schoetgen, Horæ Hebraicæ, vol. ii. p. 509., or Eisenmenger, das entdeckte Judenthum, ii. p. 711. The notion may have been grounded on the last chapter of the Prophecy of Daniel. Compare Bertholdt, c. 13.—The Rabbins deliver, "In the first year of that week (of years), that the Son of David is to come, shall that be fulfilled, 'I will rain upon one city, but I will not rain upon another.'" Amos, iv. 7.—"The second year the arrows of famine shall be sent forth. The third,

the famine shall be grievous, and men and women and children, holy men and men of good works, shall die; and there shall be a forgetfulness of the Law among those that learn it. The fourth year fulness and not fulness. The fifth year great fulness: they shall eat, and drink, and rejoice, and the Law shall return to its scholars. The sixth year, voices." (The gloss is, "a fame shall be spread that the Son of David comes, or 'they shall sound with the trumpet.") "The seventh year, wars; and in the going out of that year, the Son of David shall come." Lightfoot, xi. 421.

(3) Casaubon exercit., anti-Baron, ii.

(4) 2 Esdras, vi. 25.



Romans, whose historians, Suetonius and Tacitus, as is well known, bear witness to the fact, “Among many,” writes the latter, “there was a persuasion, that in the ancient books of the priesthood it was written, that at this precise time, the East should become mighty, and that the sovereigns of the world should issue from Judæa(1).” “In the East, an ancient and consistent opinion prevailed, that it was fated there should issue, at this time, from Judæa, those who should obtain universal dominion(2).”

Yet no question is more difficult than to ascertain the origin, the extent, the character of this belief, as it prevailed at the time of our Saviour’s coming;—how far it had spread among the surrounding nations; or how far, on the other hand, the original Jewish creed, formed from the authentic prophetic writings, had become impregnated with Oriental or Alexandrian notions. It is most probable, that there was no consistent, uniform, or authorised opinion on the subject: all was vague and indefinite; and in this vagueness and indefiniteness lay much of its power over the general mind(3). Whatever purer or loftier notions concerning the great Deliverer and Restorer, might be imparted to wise and holy men, in whatever sense we understand that “Abraham rejoiced to see the day” of the Messiah, the intimations on this subject in the earlier books of the Old Testament, though distinctly to be traced along its whole course, are few, brief, and occurring at long intervals. But from the time, and during the whole period of the Prophets, this mysterious Being becomes gradually more prominent. The future dominion of some great king, to descend from the line of David, to triumph over all his enemies, and to establish an universal kingdom of peace and happiness, of which the descriptions of the golden age in the Greek poets are but a faint and unimaginative transcript: the promise of the Messiah, in short, comes more distinctly forward. As early as the first chapters of Isaiah, he appears to assume a title and sacred designation, which at least approaches near to that of the Divinity(4); and in the later prophets, not merely does this leading characteristic maintain its place, but under the splendid poetical imagery, drawn from existing circumstances, there seems to lie hid a more profound meaning, which points to some great and general moral revolution, to be achieved by this mysterious Being.

But their sacred books, the Law and the Prophets, were not the

Nature of  
the belief  
in the  
Messiah.

The Pro-  
phets.

Tradition.

(1) Tac. Hist. v. 13.

(2) Suet. Ves. p. 4.

(3) The Jewish opinions concerning the Messiah have been examined with great diligence and accuracy by Professor Bertholdt, in his *Christologia Judæorum*. Bertholdt is what may be called a moderate Rationalist. To his work, and to Lightfoot, Schoetgen, Meuschen, and Eisenmenger, I am indebted for most of my Rabbinical quotations.

(4) Such is the opinion of Rosenmüller (on Isaiah, ix. 5. Compare likewise, on Psalm xlv, 7.). On a point much contested by modern scholars, Gesenius, in his note on the same passages, espouses the opposite opinion. Neither of these authors, it may be added, discuss the question on theological, but purely on historical and critical grounds.

clear and unmingled source of the Jewish opinions on this all-absorbing subject. Over this, as over the whole system of the law, tradition had thrown a veil; and it is this traditionary notion of the Messiah, which it is necessary here to develop: but from whence tradition had derived its apparently extraneous and independent notions, becomes a much more deep and embarrassing question (1). It is manifest from the Evangelic history (2), that although there was no settled or established creed upon the subject, yet there was a certain conventional language: particular texts of the sacred writings were universally recognised, as bearing reference to the Messiah; and there were some few characteristic credentials of his title and office, which would have commanded universal assent.

Foreign  
connec-  
tions of  
the Jews.

There are two quarters from which the Jews, as they ceased to be an insulated people, confined in the narrow tract of Palestine, and by their captivity and migrations became more mingled with other races, might insensibly contract new religious notions, the East and the West, Babylonia and Alexandria. The latter would be the chief, though not perhaps the only channel, through which the influence of Grecian opinions would penetrate into Palestine (3); and of the Alexandrian notions of the Messiah, we shall hereafter adduce two competent representatives, the author of the Book of Wisdom and Philo. But the East no doubt made a more early, profound, and lasting impression on the popular mind of the Jews. Unfortunately in no part does history present us with so melancholy a blank, as in that of the great Babyloni-  
lonia. am settlement of the people of Israel. Yet its importance in the religious, and even in the civil, affairs of the nation cannot but have been very considerable. It was only a small part of the nation which returned with the successive remigrations under Ezra and Nehemiah to their native land; and, though probably many of the poorer classes had remained behind at the period of the Captivity, and many more returned singly or in small bodies, yet on the other hand it is probable, that the tide of emigration, which at a later time was per-

(1) Bertholdt, p. 8.

(2) The brief intimations in the Gospels are almost the only absolutely certain authorities for the nature of this belief, at that particular period, except, perhaps, the more genuine part of the Apocrypha. Josephus, though he acknowledges the existence and the influence of this remarkable feature in the national character, is either inclined to treat it as a popular delusion, or to warp it to his own purposes, its fulfilment in the person of Vespasian. For his own school, Philo is a valuable witness; but among the Alexandrian Jews, the belief in a personal Messiah was much more faint and indistinct than in Palestine. The Rabbinical books, even the oldest Targumin or comments on the Sacred Writings, are somewhat suspicious, from the uncertainty of their date: still, in this as in other points of

coincidence, where their expressions are similar to those of the Christian records, there seems so manifest an improbability that these should have been adopted after the two religions had assumed an hostile position towards each other, that they may be fairly considered as vestiges of an earlier system of opinions, retained from ancient reverence, and indelible even by unplaceable animosity. It is far more likely that Christianity should speak the current language of the time, than that the Synagogue should interpolate their own traditionary records, with terms or notions borrowed from the Church.

(3) Even as early as the reign of Antiochus the Great, certain Jews had attempted to introduce Grecian manners, and had built a Grecian school or gymnasium at Jerusalem. 1 Mac. i. 71. 16. 2 Mac. ii. 4. 11, 12.

petually flowing from the valleys of Palestine into Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and even more remote regions, would often take the course of the Euphrates, and swell the numbers of the Mesopotamian colony. In the great contest between Alexander and the Persian monarchy, excepting from some rather suspicious stories in Josephus, we hear less than we might expect of this race of Jews (1). But as we approach the era of Christianity, and somewhat later, they emerge rather more into notice. While the Jews were spreading in the West, and no doubt successfully disseminating their Monotheism in many quarters, in Babylonia their proselytes were kings; and the later Jewish Temple beheld an Eastern queen (by a singular coincidence, of the same name with the celebrated mother of Constantine, the patroness of Christian Jerusalem) lavishing her wealth on the structure on Mount Moriah, and in the most munificent charity to the poorer inhabitants of the city. The name of Helena, queen of the Adiabeni, was long dear to the memory of the Jews; and her tomb was one of the most remarkable monuments near the walls of the city. Philo not only asserts that Babylon and other Eastern satrapies were full of his countrymen (2), but intimates that the apprehension of their taking up arms in behalf of their outraged religion and marching upon Palestine, weighed upon the mind of Petronius, when commanded, at all hazards, to place the statue of Caligula in the Temple (3). It appears from some hints of Josephus, that during the last war, the revolted party entertained great hopes of succour from that quarter (4); and there is good ground for supposing that the final insurrection in the time of Hadrian was connected with a rising in Mesopotamia (5). At the same period the influence of this race of Jews on the religious character of the people is no less manifest. Here was a chief scene of the preaching of the great apostle (6):

(1) There may be truth in the observation of St. Croix: "Les Grecs et les Romains avaient tant de haine et de mépris pour le peuple juif, qu'ils affectaient n'en pas parler dans leurs écrits." (*Historiens d'Alex.* p. 555.) This, however, would apply only to the later writers, which are all we now possess; but if in the contemporary historians there had been much more, it would probably, at least if to the credit of his countrymen, have been gleaned by Josephus.

(2) See on the numbers of the Jews in the Asiatic provinces, particularly Armenia; at a later period (the conquest of Armenia by Sapor, A. D. 367.) St. Martin's additions to Le Beau's *Hist. du Bas Empire*. The death of this valuable writer, it is to be feared, will deprive the learned world of his promised work on the History of the Birth and Death of Jesus Christ, which was to contain circumstantial accounts of the Jews beyond the Euphrates.

Of the different races of Jews mentioned in the Acts, as present in Jerusalem, four are from this quarter:—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia.

(3) *Leg. ad Caium*, vol. ii. p. 578. Edit Mang.

(4) Dio (or Xiphilin) asserts that they received considerable succours from the East. L. lxvi. c. 4.

(5) *Hist. of Jews*, iii 108. etc.

(6) Nothing but the stubborn obstinacy of controversy could have thrown a doubt on the plain date in the first Epistle of St. Peter (v. 13.). Philo, in two places (ii. p. 578. 587.), Josephus in one (*Ant.* xviii. 9. 8.), expressly name *Babylon* as the habitation of the great Eastern settlement. It is not certain whether the city was then entirely destroyed (*Gesenius on Isaiah*, xiii. 22.), but in fact the name was extended to the province or satrapy. But it was equally the object of the two great conflicting parties in Christianity to identify Rome with Babylon. This fact established, the Roman Catholic had an unanswerable argument to prove the contested point of St. Peter's residence in the Western metropolis; Babylon therefore was decided to mean pagan Rome. The Protestant at once concurred, for if Rome was Babylon, it was the mystic spiritual Babylon of the Apocalypse. The whole third chapter of the second Epistle appears to me full of Oriental allusions, and the example of Balaam



and we cannot but think, that its importance in early Christian history, which has usually been traced almost exclusively in the West, has been much underrated. Hence came the mystic Cabala (1) of the Jews, the chief parent of those gnostic opinions, out of which grew the heresies of the early Church : here the Jews, under the Prince of the captivity, held their most famous schools, where learning was embodied in the Babylonian Talmud ; and here the most influential heresiarch, Manes, attempted to fuse into one system the elements of Magianism, Cabalism, and Christianity. Having thus rapidly traced the fortunes of this great Jewish colony, we must reascend to the time of its first establishment.

Cabala.

From a very early period the Jews seem to have possessed a Cabala, a traditionary comment or interpretation of the sacred writings. Whether it existed before the Captivity, it is impossible to ascertain ; it is certain that many of their books, even those written by distinguished prophets, Gad and Iddo, were lost at that disastrous time. But whether they carried any accredited tradition to Babylonia, it seems evident, from the Oriental cast which it assumed, that they either brought it from thence on their return to their native land, or received it subsequently during their intercourse with their Eastern brethren (2). Down to the Captivity the Jews of Palestine had been in contact only with the religions of the neighbouring nations, which, however differently modified, appear to have been essentially the same, a sort of Nature-worship, in which the host of Heaven, especially the sun and moon, under different names, Baal and Moloch, Astarte and Mylitta, and probably as symbols or representatives of the active and passive powers of nature, no doubt with some distinction of their attributes, were the predominant objects. These religions had long degenerated into cruel or licentious superstitions ; and the Jews, in falling off to the idolatry of their neighbours, or introducing foreign rites into their own religious system, not merely offended against the great primal distinction of their faith, the unity of the godhead, but sunk from the pure, humane, and comparatively civilised institutes of their lawgiver, to the loose and sanguinary usages of barbarism. In the East, however, they encountered a religion of a far nobler and more regular structure (3) : a religion which offered no temptation to idolatrous practices ; for the Magian rejected, with the devout abhorrence of the followers of Moses, the exhibition of the Deity in the human form ; though it possessed a rich store of mythological and symbolical figures, singularly analogous to those which may be considered the poetic machinery of the later

Syrian  
Religions.

Religion  
of Persia.

seems peculiarly appropriate if written in that region.

Lucan's "*Cumque superba foret Babylon spo-  
lianda*" may indeed be mere poetic licence, or  
may allude to Seleucia,

(1) Cabala is used here in its most extensive sense. See Chiarini, p. 97.

(2) Mosheim, *De Rebus Christ.* ii. 18.

(3) *In Asia Persarum religionem ceteris esse  
nobiliorum.* Mosheim, *Inst.* p. 58., and Grot. *de  
Ver.* ii. 10.

Hebrew prophets (1). The religion of Persia seems to have held an intermediate rank between the Pantheism of India, where the whole universe emanated from the Deity, and was finally to be reabsorbed into the Deity, and the purer Theism of the Jews, which asserted the one omnific Jehovah, and seemed to place a wide and impassable interval between the nature of the Creator and that of the created being. In the Persian system, the Creation owed its existence to the conflicting powers of evil and good. These were subordinate to, or proceeding from, the Great Primal Cause (Zeruanes Akerene), Time without bounds (2), which in fact appears, as Gibbon observes, rather as a metaphysical abstraction, than as an active and presiding deity. The Creation was at once the work and the dominion of the two antagonist creators, who had balanced against each other in perpetual conflict a race of spiritual and material beings, light and darkness, good and evil. This Magianism, subsequent to the Jewish Captivity (3), and during the residence of the captives in Mesopotamia, either spread with the conquests of the Persians, from the regions farther to the east, Aderbijan and Bactria, or was first promulgated by Zoroaster, who is differently represented as the author or as the reformer of the faith. From the remarkable allusions or points of coincidence between some of the Magian tenets and the Sacred Writings (4), Hyde and Prideaux laboured to prove that Zoroaster (5) had been a pupil of Daniel, and derived those notions, which seem more nearly allied to the purer Jewish faith, from his intercourse with the Hebrew prophet, who held a high station under the victorious Medo-Persian monarchy (6). But, in fact, there is such an originality

Complete-  
ness of  
Zoroastrian system.

(1) This, it may be observed, has no connection whatever with the originality or authority of these predictions. It should be borne in mind, that in these visions it is the moral or religious meaning alone which can be the object of faith, not the figures through which that meaning is conveyed. There is no reason why the images of Daniel and Ezekiel should not be derived from, or assimilate to, the prevalent forms around them, as well as those of the rustic Amoz be chiefly drawn from pastoral or rural life. See, e.g., Chiarini's curious theory about the chariot of Ezekiel. Preface to Talmud, p. 90, and 101.

(2) So translated by Du Perron and Kleuker. There is a learned dissertation of Foucher on this subject. Acad. des Ins. vol. xxix. According to Boblen it is analogous to the Sanskrit Sarvam akaranam, the Uncreated Whole; according to Fred. Schlegel, Sarvam akharyam, the Unum indivisible.

(3) The appearance of the Magian order, before the conquest of Babylon by the Medo-Persian Kings, is an extremely difficult question. Nebuchadnezzar's army was attended (Jer. xxxix

3.) by Nergal-sharezer, the Rab-mag, רב מַג (Archimagus). Compare Bertholdt, Daniel Excurs. iii.

(4) Isaiah, xlvii. 7.

(5) The name of Zoroaster (Zerotoash), has been deduced from words signifying "the star

of gold," or "the star of splendour," and may have been a title or appellative.

(6) The hypothesis which places Zoroaster under the reign of Darius Hystaspes, identified with the Gushtasp of Persian mythological history, is maintained by Hyde, Prideaux, Anquetil du Perron, Kleuker, Herder, Goerres, Malcolm, Von Hammer, and apparently by De Guignaut. The silence of Herodotus appears to me among the strongest objections to this view.

Foucher, Tycheu, Heeren, and recently Holty, identify Gushtasp with Cyaxares I., and place the religious revolution under the previous Median dynasty.

A theory which throws Zoroaster much higher up into antiquity is developed with great ability by Rhode, in his Heilige Sage. The earlier date of the Persian prophet has likewise been maintained by Moyle, Gibbon, and Volney.

These views may in some degree be reconciled by the supposition that it was a reformation, not a primary development of the religion which took place under the Medo-Persian, or the Persian monarchy. The elements of the faith and the caste of the Magi were, I should conceive, earlier. The inculcation of agricultural habits on a people emerging from the pastoral life, so well developed by Heeren, seems to indicate a more ancient date. Consult also Gesenius on Isaiah, lxxv. 5. Constant, sur la Religion, ii. 187

and completeness in the Zoroastrian system, and in its leading principles, especially that of the antagonist powers of good and evil, it departs so widely from the ancient and simple Theism of the Jews, as clearly to indicate an independent and peculiar source, at least in its more perfect development; if it is not, as we are inclined to believe, of much more ancient date, and native to a region much further to the east than the Persian court, where Zoroaster, according to one tradition, might have had intercourse, in his youth, with the prophet Daniel.

The Zendavesta.

If, as appears to be the general opinion of the continental writers, who have most profoundly investigated the subject, we have authentic remains, or at least records which, if of later date, contain the true principles of Magianism, in the Liturgies and Institutes of the Zendavesta(1); it is by no means an improbable source in which we might discover the origin of those traditional notions of the Jews, which were extraneous to their earlier system, and which do not appear to rest on their sacred records(2). It is undoubtedly remarkable, that among the Magian tenets, we find so

(1) It may be necessary, in this country, briefly to state the question as to the authenticity or value of these documents. They were brought from the East by that singular adventurer, Anquetil du Perron. Sir W. Jones, in a letter, not the most successful of the writings of that excellent and accomplished man, being a somewhat stiff and laboured imitation of the easy irony of Voltaire, threw a shade of suspicion over the character of Du Perron, which in England has never been dispelled, and, except among Oriental scholars, has attached to all his publications. Abroad, however, the antiquity of the Zendavesta, at least its value as a trustworthy record of the Zoroastrian tenets, has been generally acknowledged. If altogether spurious, those works must be considered as forgeries of Du Perron. But, I., they are too incomplete and imperfect for forgeries; if it had been worth Du Perron's while to fabricate the Institutes of Zoroaster, we should, no doubt, have had something more elaborate than several books of prayers, and treatises of different ages, from which it required his own industry, and that of his German translator, Kleuker, to form a complete system. II. Du Perron must have forged the language in which the books are written, as well as the books themselves. But the Zend is universally admitted by the great Orientalists and historians of language to be a genuine and very curious branch of the Eastern dialects. (See Bopp. *Vergleichende Grammatik*.) It should be added, that the publication of the Zendavesta, in the original, has been commenced by M. Bournouf in Paris, and by M. Olshausen in Germany.

III. These documents may be considered as more modern compilations, of little greater authority than the Sadder, which Hyde translated from the modern Persian. That they are of the age of Zoroaster, it may be difficult to prove; but their internal evidence, and their coincidence with the other notices of the Persian religion, scattered among the writings of the Greeks and Romans (see Du Perron's and Kleuker's illustrations, especially the Persica of the latter),

afford sufficient ground for supposing that they contain the genuine and unadulterated elements of the Zoroastrian faith, and, if not of primitive, are of very high antiquity. The traces of Mahometanism, which Brucker (vol. vi. p. 68) supposed that he had detected, and which are apparent in the Sadder, are rather notions borrowed by Mahomet from the Jews; but whence obtained by the Jews, is the question. Mr. Erskine, the highest authority on such subjects, considers the existing Zendavesta to have been compiled in the age of Ardeshir Babbehan, the great restorer of the Magian faith. (Bombay Transactions.) In Professor Neuman's translation of Vartan there is a curious sentence, which seems to intimate that the books of the Magian faith either did not exist at that time, or were inaccessible to the generality.

IV. A thought has sometimes crossed my own mind (it has been anticipated by Du Perron), whether they can be the sacred books of a sect formed from an union of Gnostic or Manichæan Christianity with the ancient Persian religion. But there is no vestige of purely Christian tradition; and those points in which Parseism seems to coincide with Christianity are integral and inseparable parts of their great system. And against all such opinions must be weighed the learned paper of Professor Rask, who gives strong reasons for the antiquity both of the language and of the books. The language he considers the vernacular tongue of ancient Media. (Trans. of Asiatic Society, iii. 524.) Still, while I appeal to the Zendavesta as authority, I shall only adduce the more general leading principles of the faith, of which the antiquity appears certain; and rarely any tenet for which we have not corroborative authority in the Greek and Latin writers. The testimonies of the latter have been collected both by Du Perron and Kleuker.

(2) Mosheim has traced with brevity, but with his usual good sense and candour, this analogy between the traditional notions of the Jews and those of the Magians. *De Reb. antè Const. M. ii. 7.*



many of those doctrines, about which the great schism in the Jewish popular creed, that of the traditionists and antitraditionists, contended for several centuries. It has already been observed, that in the later prophetic writings, many allusions and much of what may be called the poetic language and machinery, is strikingly similar to the main principles of the Magian faith. Nor can it be necessary to suggest how completely such expressions as the “children of light,” and the “children of darkness,” had become identified with the common language of the Jews, at the time of our Saviour: and when Jesus proclaimed himself “the Light of the world,” no doubt he employed a term familiar to the ears of the people, though, as usual, they might not clearly comprehend in what sense it was applicable to the Messiah, or to the purely moral character of the new religion.

It is generally admitted, that the Jewish notions about the angels (1), one great subject of dispute in their synagogues, and what may be called their Dæmonology, received a strong foreign tinge during their residence in Babylonia. The earliest books of the Old Testament fully recognize the ministration of angels; but in Babylonia (2) this simpler creed grew up into a regular hierarchy, in which the degrees of rank and subordination were arranged with almost heraldic precision. The seven great archangels of Jewish tradition correspond with the Amschaspands of the Zendavesta (3): and in strict mutual analogy, both systems arrayed against each other a separate host of spiritual beings, with distinct powers and functions. Each nation, each individual had in one case his Ferver, in the other his guardian angel (4); and was exposed to the malice of the hostile Dev or Dæmon. In apparent allusion to or coincidence with this system, the visions of Daniel represent Michael, the tutelar angel or intelligence of the Jewish people, in opposition to the four angels of the great monarchies; and even our Saviour seems to condescend to the popular language, when he represents the parental care of the Almighty over children under the significant and beautiful

The angels.

(1) La doctrine de l'existence des anges, fondée sur la révélation, a été beaucoup modifiée par les opinions des peuples qui habitaient sur les rives du fleuve Cobar, dans la Babylonie, et dans les autres pays de l'Orient, où les deux royaumes d'Israël et de Juda furent dispersés. Sous ce point de vue on peut regarder les *Mehestani*, ou les sectateurs de Zoroastre, comme ceux qui ont appris beaucoup de choses aux dépositaires de la tradition, et dont les maximes se retrouvent aujourd'hui dans les deux Talmuds. Chiarini, Le Talmud de Babylone, tom. i. p. 104.

(2) Even the traditionists among the Jews allowed that the names of the angels came from Babylon; they are nevertheless pure Hebrew or Chaldean. Michael (who is as God), Gabriel, the Man of God. Gesen. Lex. in verb. Bellermaan, über die Essäer, p. 30. The transition from the primitive to the Babylonian belief may be traced in the apocryphal book of Tobit, no doubt of Eastern origin. On the Notions of Dæmons, see Jortin, Eecl. Hist. i. 161.

(3) Jonathan, the Chaldean paraphrast, on Gen. ii. 7. “The Lord said to the seven angels that stand before him.” Drusius, on Luke i. 19. Seven, however, seems to have been the number of perfection among the Jews from the earliest period. Old Testament, *passim*.

Six seems the sacred number with the Persians. The Amschaspands are usually reckoned six; but Oroumasd is sometimes included to make up seven. See the *Yesht* of the Seven Amschaspands, in the *Zendavesta* of Du Perron or Kleuker. Compare also Foucler's *Disquisition*, translated in Kleuker, *Anhang*, i. p. 294.

(4) In the LXX. the doctrine of guardian angels is interpolated into the translation of Deut. xxxii. 8. Plato adopted the notion either mediately, or immediately, from the East. Polit. et in Critia (in init.). Compare Max. Tyrius, xv. 17. Hostanes the Magian held the same opinions. Cypr. de Van. Idol., Min. Fel.

image, "that in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven (1)."

Principle  
of Evil.

The great impersonated Principle of Evil appears to have assumed much of the character of the antagonist power of darkness. The name itself of Satan (2), which in the older poetical book of Job is assigned to a spirit of different attributes, one of the celestial ministers who assemble before the throne of the Almighty, and is used in the earlier books of the Old Testament in its simple sense of an adversary, became appropriated to the prince of the malignant spirits—the head and representative of the spiritual world, which ruled over physical as well as moral evil.

The Supreme Deity removed from all connection with the material world.

Even the notion of the one Supreme Deity had undergone some modification consonant to certain prevailing opinions of the time. Wherever any approximation had been made to the sublime truth of the one great First Cause, either awful religious reverence or philosophic abstraction had removed the primal Deity entirely beyond the sphere of human sense, and supposed that the intercourse of the Divinity with man, the moral government, and even the original creation, had been carried on by the intermediate agency, either in Oriental language of an Emanation, or in Platonic, of the Wisdom, Reason, or Intelligence of the one Supreme. This Being was more or less distinctly impersonated, according to the more popular or more philosophic, the more material or more abstract notions of the age or people (3). This was the doctrine from the Ganges, or even the shores of the Yellow Sea (4), to the Ilissus; it was the fundamental principle of the Indian religion and Indian philosophy (5); it was the basis of Zoroastrianism (6), it was pure Platonism (7), it was the Platonic Judaism of the Alexandrian school. Many fine passages might be quoted from Philo, on the impossibility that the first self-existing Being should become cognizable to the sense of man; and even in Palestine, no doubt, John the Baptist, and our Lord himself, spoke no new doctrine, but rather the common sentiment of the more enlightened, when they declared that "no man had seen God at any time (8)." In conformity with

Mediator.

(1) Matt. xviii. 10.

(2) Schleusner. Lex. voc. Satan. Dr. Russell, in a Dissertation prefixed to his Connection of Sacred and Profane History, has traced the gradual development of this tenet. It is rather singular that in the work of Theodorus of Mopuestia on Magianism (quoted Photii Bibliotheca, num. 81.), Zeruon is said to have produced τοῦ Ὁρμισδαν\* \* καὶ τὸν Σατανάν. On the other side of this question may be consulted Rosenmuller on Job, ch. i., and Michaelis, Epimetron in Lowth, de sacra Poesi.

(3) It is curious to trace the development of this idea in the older and in the apocryphal books of the Old Testament. In the book of Proverbs, the Wisdom is little more than the great attribute of the Deity, an intellectual personification: in Ecclesiasticus it is a distinct and separate being, and "stands up beautiful," before the throne of God, xxv. 1.

(4) M. Abel Remusat says, of the three Chinese religions, "Parmi leurs dogmes fondamentaux, enseignés six siècles avant notre ère par Lao-tseu, l'un de leurs maîtres, est celui de l'existence de la raison primordiale, qui a créé le monde, le Logos des Platoniciens. Rech. Asiat. 2 ser. i. 38.

(5) In the Indian system Brahm, in the neuter, is the great Primal Spirit. See Baron W. Von Humboldt, über den Bhagavat Gita. Compare Bopp. Conjugations System, 290. 301.

(6) See above.

(7) Πάν τὸ δαιμονιὸν μεταξὺ ἐστὶ Θεοῦ καὶ θνητοῦ—Θεὸς δὲ ἀνθρώπων οὐ μίγνυται, ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦτου πᾶσι ἐστὶν ἡ ὁμίλια. Plato, in Symp.

(8) John, i. 18. Compare John, i. 4. 18. vi. 46.

this principle, the Jews, in the interpretation of the older Scriptures, instead of direct and sensible communication from the one great Deity, had interposed either one or more intermediate beings, as the channels of communication. According to one accredited tradition alluded to by St. Stephen, the law was delivered “by the disposition of angels (1);”—according to another, this office was delegated to a single angel, sometimes called the angel of the Law (2), at others the Metatron. But the more ordinary representative, as it were, of God to the sense and mind of man, was the Memra, or the Divine Word; and it is remarkable, that the same appellation is found in the Indian (3), the Persian (4), the Platonic, and the Alexandrian systems. By the Targumists, the earliest Jewish commentators on the Scriptures, this term had been already applied to the Messiah (5); nor is it necessary to observe the manner in which it has been sanctified by its introduction into the Christian scheme (6). From this remarkable uniformity of conception, and coincidence of language, has sometimes been assumed a common tradition, generally disseminated throughout the race of man. I should be content with receiving it as the general acquiescence of the human mind, in the necessity of some mediation between the pure spiritual nature of the Deity, and the intellectual and moral being of man, of which the sublimest and simplest, and therefore the most natural development, was the revelation of God in Christ—in the

The Word.

(1) Compare LXX. Transl. of Deut. xxxiii. 2., where the angels are interpolated. *Ἡμῶν τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν δογμάτων καὶ παθσιώτατα τῶν ἐν τοῖς νόμοις δι' ἀγγέλων παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ μαθéntων.* Joseph. Ant. xv. 5. 3. Compare Chiarini, i. 307. And on the traces of the Judæo-Alexandrian philosophy in the LXX. Dähne, *Judisch-Alexandrianische Religions Philosophie*, part ii. pp. 49—56.

(2) Compare Gal. iii. 19. *Deus Mosen legem docuit: cum autem descenderet, tanto timore percussus est, ut omnium obliuisceretur. Deus autem statim Jesifiam, Angelum legis, vocavit, qui ipsi legem tradidit bene ordinatam et custoditam, omnesque angeli amici ejus facti sunt.* Jalkut Ruben, quoted by Wetstein and Schoetgen, in loco. See also Eisenmenger, 1—56. Two angels seem to be introduced in this latter tradition, the angelus Metatron, and Jesifya, angelus Legis.

Philo, de Præm, rationalises further, and considers the commandments communicated, as it were, by the air made articulate, ii. 405.

(3) It appears in the Indian system: Vach signifying speech. She is the active power of Brahma, proceeding from him: she speaks a hymn in the Vedas, in praise of herself as the supreme and universal soul. (Colebrooke, in *Asiatic Researches*, viii. p. 402.) *La première parole que proféra le Créateur, ce fut Om: Om parut avant toutes choses, et il s'appelle le premier né du Créateur. Om ou Prana, pareil au pur éther renfermant en soi toutes les qualités, tous les élémens, est le nom, le corps de Brahm,*

et par conséquent infini comme lui, créateur et maître de toutes choses. Brahm méditant sur le Verbe divin y trouva l'eau primitive. Oupneek-Hat, quoted in De Guignaut, p. 644.

Origen, or rather the author of the *Philosophoumena* inserted in his works, was aware of this fact. *Ἄντοῖ (Brachmanes) τὸν Θεὸν φῶς εἶναι λέγουσιν οὐχ ὅποιον τις ἰρᾷ, οὐδ' οἶον ἥλιος καὶ πῦρ ἀλλὰ ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς λόγος, οὐχ ὁ ἐναρθρός, ἀλλὰ ὁ τῆς γνώσεως, δι' οὗ τὰ κρύπτα τῆς γνώσεως, μυστήρια ὁρᾶται σόφους.* de Brachman.

According to a note, partly by M. le Normant, partly by M. Champollion, in Chateaubriand (*Etudes sur l'Histoire*), Thoth is, in the hieroglyphical language of Egypt, the Word.

(4) In the Persian system the use of the term Honover is by no means consistent; strictly speaking it occupies only a third place. Ormuzd, the good Principle, created the external universe by his Word (Honover): in another sense the great primal spirit is the Word; in another, the Principle of Good.

(5) It is by the latter, as may be seen in the works of Lightfoot, Schoetgen, and other Talmudic writers, and in Bertholdt (*Christologia Judaica*), that it is applied to the Messiah, not by Philo, who, as will appear, scarcely, if ever, notices a personal Messiah.

(6) Dr. Burton (in his *Bampton Lectures*) acknowledges, of course, the antiquity of the term, and suggests the most sensible mode of reconciling this fact with its adoption into Christianity.



inadequate language of our version of the original “the brightness of (God’s) glory, and the express image of his person (1).”

Future  
State.

No question has been more strenuously debated than the knowledge of a future state, entertained by the earlier Jews. At all events it is quite clear, that before the time of Christ, not merely the immortality of the soul, but what is very different, a final resurrection (2), had become completely interwoven with the popular belief. Passages in the later prophets, Daniel and Ezekiel, particularly a very remarkable one in the latter, may be adduced as the first distinct authorities on which this belief might be grounded. It appears, however, in its more perfect development, soon after the return from the captivity. As early as the revolt of the Maccabees, it was so deeply rooted in the public mind, that we find a solemn ceremony performed for the dead (3). From henceforth it became the leading article of the great schism between the traditionists and the anti-traditionists, the Pharisees and the Sadducees : and in the gospels we cannot but discover at a glance, its almost universal prevalence. Even the Roman historian was struck by its influence on the indomitable character of the people (4). In the Zoroastrian religion a resurrection holds a place no less prominent, than in the later Jewish belief (5). On the day of the final triumph of the Great Principle of Light, the children of light are to be raised from the dead, to partake in the physical splendour, and to assume the moral perfection of the subjects of the triumphant Principle of Good. In the same manner, the Jews associated together the coming of the Messiah with the final resurrection. From many passages, quoted by Lightfoot, I select the following : “The righteous, whom the Lord shall raise from the dead in the days of the Messiah, when they are restored to life, shall not again return to their dust, neither in the days of the Messiah, nor in the following age, but their flesh shall remain upon them (6).”

Jewish  
notion of  
the  
Messiah.

Out of all these different sources, from whence they derived a knowledge of a future state, the passages of their prophets in their own sacred writings (among which that in the book of Daniel, from its coincidence with the Zoroastrian tenet, might easily be misapplied), and the oriental element, the popular belief of the Palestinian Jews had moulded up a splendid though confused vision of the appearance of the Messiah, the simultaneous regeneration of all things, the resurrection of the dead, and the reign of the Messiah upon

1. Ἀπαύρασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακ-  
τὴς τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ. Hebrews i. 3.

2. It is singular how often this material point of difference has been lost sight of in the discussions on this subject.

3. 2 Macc. xii. 44.

4. Animasque praeio et supplicitis peremptorum aeternas putant. Tac. Hist. v. 5.

(5) Hyde, de Vet. Pers. Relig. 537. and 293. Beausobre, Hist. du Manichéisme, i. 204. Ἀνα-  
βίσεις κατὰ τοὺς Μάρτυς τοὺς ἀν-  
θρώπους καὶ ἱερεῖς ἀθανάτους. Theopomp. apud Diog. Laert. Kleuker's Zendavesta and Anhang. part ii. p. 110. Bundeheesch, xix. xxxi., etc. Compare Gesenius on Isaiah xxvi. 19.

(6) Lightfoot, v. 255 x. 495. xi. 353.

earth. All these events were to take place at once, or to follow close upon each other. In many passages, the language of the apostles clearly intimates that they were as little prepared to expect a purely religious renovation, at the coming of the Messiah, as the rest of their countrymen; and throughout the apostolic age, this notion still maintained its ground, and kept up the general apprehension, that the final consummation was immediately at hand(1). It is no doubt impossible to assign their particular preponderance to these several elements, which combined to form the popular belief: yet, even if many of their notions entirely originated in the Zoroastrian system, it would be curious to observe how, by the very calamities of the Jews, Divine Providence adapted them for the more important part which they were to fill in the history of mankind; and to trace the progressive manner in which the Almighty prepared the development of the more perfect and universal system of Christianity.

For, with whatever oriental colouring Jewish tradition might invest the image of the great Deliverer, in Palestine it still remained rigidly national and exclusive. If the Jew concurred with the worshipper of Ormusd in expecting a final restoration of all things through the agency of a Divine Intelligence (2) that Being, according to the promise to their fathers, was to be intimately connected with their race; he was to descend from the line of David; he was to occupy Sion, the holy city, as the centre of his government; he was to make his appearance in the temple on Mount Moriah; he was to re-assemble all the scattered descendants of the tribes, to discomfit and expel their barbarous and foreign rulers. The great distinction between the two races of mankind, fell in completely with their hereditary prejudices: the children of Abraham were, as their birthright, the children of light; and even the doctrine of the resurrection was singularly harmonised with that exclusive nationality. At least the first resurrection (3) was to be their separate portion (4); it was to summon them, if not all, at least the

Messiah,  
national.

(1) Compare 2 Esdras vi. 24, 25.

(2) The Persians long preserved the notion of a restoration of the law of Zoroaster by a kind of Messiah. "Suivant les traditions des Perses, rapportées dans la Zerdouscht-naméh et dans le Djamaspi-nazem, Pashoutan, l'un des personnages destinés à faire refleurir la religion de Zoroastre, et l'empire des Perses dans les derniers temps, demeure en attendant ce moment dans le Kanguedez, pays qui paraît répondre en partie au Khorassan. Il en sortira à l'ordre qui lui sera apporté par un ized (*i. e.* spiritus celestis) nommé Serosch, et reviendra dans l'Iran. Par l'efficacité des paroles sacrées de l'Avesta, il mettra en fuite les barbares qui désolaient ce pays, y rétablira la religion dans toute sa pureté, et y fera renaitre l'abondance, le bonheur et la paix. Silvestre de Sacy, sur div. Ant. de la Perse. p. 55.

(3) 2 Esd. xi. 10—31. All Israelites (says the

Mischna. Tract. Sanh. c. xi. 12.) shall partake in the life to come—except those who deny the resurrection of the dead (the Sadducees?) and that the law came from heaven, and the Epicureans. R. Akiba added, he who reads foreign books—Aba Schaul, he who pronounces the ineffable name (Jehovah). Three kings and four private individuals have no share in the life to come: —the kings, Jeroboam, Ahab, Manasseh; the four private men, Balaam, Doeg, Achitophel, —?

(4) It is good (says the martyred youth in the book of Maccabees) being put to death by men, to be raised up again by him; as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life. 2 Macc. ix. 14; xii. 44.; also 2 Esd. ii. 23. Compare the speech of Josephus, Hist. of the Jews, vol. ii. p. 312. Quotations might be multiplied from the rabbinical writers.

more righteous, from Paradise, from the abode of departed spirits; and under their triumphant king, they were to enjoy a thousand years of glory and bliss upon the recreated and renovated earth (1).

Judæo-  
Grecian  
system.

We pass from the rich poetic impersonations, the fantastic but expressive symbolic forms of the East, to the colder and clearer light of Grecian philosophy, with which the Western Jews, especially in Alexandria, had endeavoured to associate their own religious truths. The poetic age of Greece had long passed away before the two nations came into contact; and the same rationalising tendency of the times led the Greek to reduce his religion, the Jew the history of his nation, to a lofty moral allegory (2). Enough of poetry remained in the philosophic system, adopted in the great Jewish Alexandrian school, that of Plato, to leave ample scope for the imagination: and indeed there was a kind of softened Orientalism, probably derived by Plato from his master Pythagoras from the East, which readily assimilated with the mystic interpretations of the Egypto-Jewish theology. The Alexandrian notions of the days of the Messiah are faintly shadowed out in the book "of the Wisdom of Solomon (3)," in terms which occasionally remind us of some which occur in the New Testament. The righteous Jews, on account of their acknowledged moral and religious superiority, were to "judge the nations," and have "dominion over all people." But the more perfect development of these views is to be found in the works of Philo. This writer, who however inclined to soar into the cloudy realms of mysticism, often rests in the middle region of the moral sublime, and abounds in passages which would scarcely do discredit to his Athenian master, had arrayed a splendid vision of the perfectibility of human nature, in which his own nation was to take the most distinguished part. From them knowledge and virtue were to emanate through the universal race of man. The whole world, convinced at length of the moral superiority of the Mosaic institutes, interpreted, it is true, upon the allegorical system, and so harmonised with the sublimest Platonism of the Greeks, was to submit in voluntary homage, and render their allegiance to the great religious teachers and examples of mankind. The Jews themselves, thus suddenly regenerated to more than the primitive purity and loftiness of their Law, (in which the Divine Reason,

(1) Tanchuma, fol. 255. Quot sunt dies Messie? R. Elieser, filius R. Jose, Galileus, dixit Messie tempora sunt mille anni, secundum dictum Jer. xxiii, 4. Dies enim Dei mille est annorum. Bertholdt, p. 38.

The holy blessed God will renew the world for a thousand years—quoted by Lightfoot, iii. 37. If I presume to treat the millenium as a fable "of Jewish dotage," I may remind my readers that this expression is taken from what once stood as an article (the forty-first) of our church. See Collier for the Articles in Edward the Sixth's reign. Atque de hujus in his terris regno, mille

annos duraturo, ejusdemque deliciis et voluptatibus, de bellis ejus cum terribili quodam adversario quem Antichristum dicebant, de victoriis denique earumque fructibus mirabilia narrabant somnia, quorum deinde pars ad Christianos transferebatur. Mosheim, ii. 8.

This was the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God—of Christ, or emphatically "the kingdom," See Kuinoel, vol. i. p. 61. Schoetgen, Hor. Heb. p. 1147.

(2) Compare Bertholdt, ch. vi.

(3) Wisdom, iii. 8.; v. 16.; viii. 14.



the Logos, was as it were embodied,) were to gather together from all quarters, and under the guidance of a more than human being, unseen to all eyes but those of the favoured nation (1) (such was the only vestige of the Messiah) to re-assemble in their native land. There the great era of virtue, and peace, and abundance, productiveness of the soil, prolificness in the people, in short, of all the blessings promised in the book of Deuteronomy, was to commence and endure for ever. This people were to be invincible, since true valour is inseparable from true virtue. By a singular inference, not out of character with allegoric interpreters who, while they refine the plainest facts and precepts to a more subtle and mystic meaning, are apt to take that which is evidently figurative in a literal sense, the very wild beasts in awe and wonder at this pure and passionless race, who shall have ceased to rage against each other with bestial ferocity, were to tame their savage hostility to mankind (2). Thus the prophecy of Isaiah, to which Philo seems to allude, though he does not adduce the words, was to be accomplished to the letter; and that paradisaical state of amity between brute and man, so beautifully described by Milton, perhaps from this source, was finally to be renewed. And as the Jewish philosopher, contrary to most of his own countrymen, and to some of the Grecian sects, denied the future dissolution of the world by fire, and asserted its eternity (3), he probably contemplated the everlasting duration of this peaceful and holy state.

Reign of  
Messiah,  
according  
to Alexandrian  
Jews.

Such, for no doubt the Alexandrian opinions had penetrated into Palestine, particularly among the Hellenist Jews—such were the vast, incoherent, and dazzling images with which the future seemed to the hopes of the Jewish people (4). They admitted either a part or the whole of the common belief, as accorded with their tone of mind and feeling. Each region, each rank, each sect; the Babylonian, the Egyptian, the Palestinian, the Samaritan; the Pharisee, the lawyer, the zealot, arrayed the Messiah in those attributes which suited his own temperament. Of that which was more methodically taught in the synagogue or the adjacent school, the populace caught up whatever made the deeper impression. The enthusiasm took an active or contemplative, an ambitious or a religious, an earthly or a heavenly tone, according to the education, habits, or station of the believer; and to different men

Belief different according to character of the believer.

(1) De Execl. ii. 435, 436.

(2) De Præm, ii. p. 422.

(3) De Mundi incorruptibilitate, passim.

(4) The following passages from the apocryphal books may be consulted; I do not think it necessary to refer to all the citations which might be made from the Prophets:—The “faithful prophet” is mentioned, 1 Macc. xiv. 41; the discomfiture of the enemies of Israel, Judith, xvi. 17; universal peace, Ecclesiast. i. 23, 24; the re-assembling of the tribes, Tobit, xiii. 13—14. Baruch, ii. 34, 35; the conversion of many

nations, Tobit, xiii. 11. xiv. 6, 7: see particularly the second apocryphal book of Esdras, which, although manifestly Judæo-Christian, is of value as illustrating the opinions of the times. —“Thou madest the world for our sakes; as for the other people, which also come of Adam, thou hast said that they are nothing, but be like unto spittle; and hast likened the abundance of them unto a drop that falleth from a vessel.” “If the world now be made for our sakes, why do we not possess an inheritance with the world? how long shall this endure?” 2 Esdras, vi. 56—59.

the Messiah was man or angel, or more than angel; he was king (1), conqueror, or moral reformer; a more victorious Joshua, a more magnificent Herod, a wider-ruling Cæsar, a wiser Moses (2), a holier Abraham (3); an angel, the Angel of the Covenant, the Metaton, the Mediator between God and man (4); Michael, the great utelar archangel of the nation, who appears by some to have been identified with the mysterious Being who led them forth from Egypt; he was the Word of God (5); an Emanation from the Deity; himself partaking of the divine nature. While this was the religious belief, some there were, no doubt, of the Sadducaic party, or the half-Grecised adherents of the Herodian family, who treated the whole as a popular delusion; or, as Josephus to Vespasian, would not scruple to employ it as a politic means for the advancement of their own fortunes. While the robber chieftain looked out from his hill-tower to see the blood-red banner of him whom he literally expected to come "from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah," and "treading the wine-press in his wrath," the Essene in his solitary hermitage, or monastic fraternity of husbandmen, looked to the reign of the Messiah, when the more peaceful images of the same prophet would be accomplished, and the Prince of Peace establish his quiet and uninterrupted reign.

Popular  
belief.

In the body of the people, the circumstances of the times powerfully tended both to develop more fully, and to stamp more deeply into their hearts, the expectation of a temporal deliverer, a conqueror, a king. As misgovernment irritated, as exaction pressed, as national pride was wounded by foreign domination, so enthusiasm took a fiercer and more martial turn: as the desire of national independence became the predominant sentiment, the Messiah was more immediately expected to accomplish that which lay nearest to their hearts. The higher views of his character, and the more unworldly hopes of a spiritual and moral revolution, receded farther and farther from the view; and as the time approached in which the Messiah was to be born, the people in general were in a less favourable state of mind to listen to the doctrines of peace, humility, and love, or to recognise that Messiah in a being so entirely divested of temporal power or splendour. In the ruling party,

(1) The Gospels, *passim*; 2 Esdras, xii. 32.

(2) Thou wilt proclaim liberty to thy people, the house of Israel, by the hand of Messiah, as thou didst by the hand of Moses and Aaron, on the day of the Passover. Chald. Par. on Lament. ii. 22. quoted by Lightfoot, v. 161.

Among others to the same purport, the following, of a later date, is curious. Moses came out of the wilderness, and King Messiah out of the midst of Rome; the one spake in the head of a cloud, and the other spake in the head of a cloud, and the Word of the Lord speaking between these, and they walking together. Targ. Jer. on Exod. xii.

(3) "Behold, glorious shall be my servant

King Messiah, exalted, lofty, and very high: more exalted than Abraham, for it is written of him, I have lifted up my hand to the Lord (Gen. xiv. 22.); and more exalted than Moses, for it is written of him, He saith of me, take him unto thy bosom, for he is greater than the fathers." Jalkut Shamuni; see Bertholdt, 101.

Some of the titles of the Messiah, recognised by general belief and usage, will be noticed as they occur in the course of the history.

(4) Sohar, quoted by Bertholdt, p. 121. 133.

(5) Many of the quotations about the Memra, or divine Word, may be found in Dr. Pye Smith's work on the Messiah.

on the other hand, as will hereafter appear, the dread of this inflammable state of the public mind, and the dangerous position of affairs, would confirm that jealousy of innovation inseparable from established governments. Every tendency to commotion would be repressed with a strong hand, or at least the rulers would be constantly on the watch, by their forward zeal in condemning all disturbers of the public peace, to exculpate themselves with their foreign masters from any participation in the tumult. Holding, no doubt, with devout, perhaps with conscientious earnestness, the promised coming of the Messiah, as an abstract truth, and as an article of their religious creed, their own interests, their rank and authority, were so connected with the existing order of things, political prudence would appear so fully to justify more than ordinary caution, that while they would have fiercely resented any imputation on their want of faith in the divine promises, it would have been difficult, even by the most public and imposing "signs," to have satisfied their cool incredulity.

With all these elements of political and religious excitement stirring through the whole fabric of society, it would be difficult to conceive a nation, in a more extraordinary state of suspense and agitation, than the Jews about the period of the birth of Christ. Their temporal and religious fortunes seemed drawing to an immediate issue. Their king lay slowly perishing of a lingering and loathsome disease; and his temper, which had so often broken out into paroxysms, little short of insanity, now seemed to be goaded by bodily and mental anguish to the fury of a wild beast. Every day might be anticipated the spectacle of the execution of his eldest son, now on his way from Rome, and known to have been detected in his unnatural treasons. It seemed that even yet the royal authority and the stern fanaticism of the religious party, which had, for many years, lowered upon each other with hostile front, might grapple in a deadly struggle. The more prudent of the religious leaders could scarcely restrain the indignant enthusiasm of their followers, which broke out at once on the accession of Archelaus; while, on the other hand, the almost incredible testamentary cruelty, by which Herod commanded the heads of the principal Jewish families to be assembled in the Hippodrome, at the signal of his death, to be cut down in a promiscuous massacre, may reasonably be ascribed to remorseless policy, as well as to frantic vengeance. He might suppose that, by removing all opponents of weight and influence, he could secure the peaceable succession of his descendants, if the emperor, according to his promise, should ratify the will, by which he had divided his dominions among his surviving sons (1).

State of  
political  
confusion.

(1) Compare Hist. of the Jews, vol. ii. p. 125.



Birth of  
Christ.

In the midst of this civil confusion, that great event took place, which was to produce so total a revolution in the state of all mankind. However striking the few incidents which are related of the birth of Christ, when contemplated distinct and separate from the stirring transactions of the times, and through the atmosphere, as it were, of devotional feelings, which at once seem to magnify and harmonise them ; yet, for this very reason, we are perhaps scarcely capable of judging the effect which such events actually produced, and the relative magnitude in which they appeared to the contemporary generation. For if we endeavour to cast ourselves back into the period to which these incidents belong, and place ourselves, as it were in the midst of the awful political crisis, which seemed about to decide at once the independence or servitude of the nation, and might, more or less, affect the private and personal welfare of each family and individual, it will by no means move our wonder, that the commotion excited by the appearance of the Magians in Jerusalem, and the announcement of the birth of the Christ, should not have made a more deep impression on the public mind, and should have passed away, it should seem, so speedily from the popular remembrance. In fact, even if generally credited, the intelligence that the Messiah had appeared in the form of a new-born infant, would rather perhaps have disappointed, than gratified, the high-wrought expectation, which looked for an instant, an immediate deliverance, and would be too impatient to await the slow development of his manhood. Whether the more considerate expected the Deliverer suddenly to reveal himself in his maturity of strength and power, may be uncertain : but the last thing that the more ardent and fiery looked for, particularly those who supposed that the Messiah would partake of the divine or superhuman nature, was his appearance as a child ; the last throne to which they would be summoned to render their homage, would be the cradle of a helpless infant (1).

Belief in  
preternatural  
interposi-  
tions.

Nor is it less important, throughout the early history of Christianity, to seize the spirit of the times. Events which appear to us so extraordinary, that we can scarcely conceive that they should either fail in exciting a powerful sensation, or ever be obliterated from the popular remembrance, in their own day might pass off as of little more than ordinary occurrence. During the whole life of Christ, and the early propagation of the religion, it must be borne in mind that they took place in an age, and among a people, which superstition had made so familiar with what were supposed to be preternatural events, that wonders awakened no emotion, or were speedily superseded by some new demand on the ever-ready belief. The Jews of that period not only believed that the Supreme Being

(1) "When Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." John, vii. 27.

had the power of controlling the course of nature, but that the same influence was possessed by multitudes of subordinate spirits, both good and evil. Where the pious Christian in the present day would behold the direct agency of the Almighty, the Jews would invariably have interposed an angel, as the author or ministerial agent in the wonderful transaction. Where the Christian moralist would condemn the fierce passion, the ungovernable lust, or the inhuman temper, the Jew discerned the workings of diabolical possession. Scarcely a malady was endured, or crime committed, but it was traced to the operation of one of these myriad dæmons, who watched every opportunity of exercising their malice in the sufferings and the sins of men.

Yet the first incident in Christian history, the annunciation of the conception and birth of John the Baptist (1), as its wonderful circumstances took place in a priestly family, and on so public a scene as the temple, might be expected to excite the public attention in no ordinary degree. The four Levitical families who returned from the captivity had been distributed into twenty-four courses, one of which came into actual office in the temple every week : they had assumed the old names, as if descended in direct lineage from the original heads of families ; and thus the regular ministrations of the priesthood were re-organised on the ancient footing, coeval with the foundation of the temple. In the course of Abia, the eighth in order (2), was an aged priest, named Zachariah. The officiating course were accustomed to cast lots for the separate functions. Some of these were considered of higher dignity than others, which were either of a more menial character, or at least were not held in equal estimation. Almost the most important was the watching and supplying with incense the great brazen altar, which stood within the building of the temple, in the first or holy place. Into this, at the sound of a small bell, which gave notice to the worshippers at a distance, the ministering priest entered alone : and in the sacred chamber, into which the light of day never penetrated, but where the dim fires of the altar, and the chandeliers, which were never extinguished, gave a solemn and uncertain light still more bedimmed by the clouds of smoke arising from the newly fed altar of incense, no doubt, in the pious mind, the sense of the more immediate presence of the Deity, only separated by the veil, which divided the Holy place from the Holy of Holies, would constantly have awakened the most profound emotions. While the priest was employed within the gates, the multitude of worshippers in the adjacent court awaited his return ; for it should seem, that the offering of incense was considered emblematic of the prayers

Concep-  
tion and  
birth of  
John the  
Baptist,  
(s. c. 5).

(1) Luke, i. 5—22.

(2) As each came into office twice in the year, and there is nothing to indicate whether this was the first or second period, it appears to me quite impossible to calculate the time of the year in which this event took place. Of this ordering of the courses, observes Lightfoot, both Talmuds speak largely. iii. 21.

of the whole nation; and though it took place twice every day, at morning and evening, the entrance and return of the priest from the mysterious precincts, was watched by the devout with something of awful anxiety.

This day, to the general astonishment, Zachariah, to whom the function had fallen, lingered far beyond the customary time. For it is said of the high-priest's annual entrance into the Holy of Holies, that he usually staid within as short a time as possible, lest the anxious people should fear, that on account of some omission in the offering, or guilt in the minister, or perhaps in the nation, of which he was the federal religious head, he might have been stricken with death. It may be supposed, therefore, that even in the subordinate ceremonies there was a certain ordinary time, after which the devouter people would begin to tremble, lest their representative, who in their behalf was making the national offering, might have met with some sinister or fatal sign of the divine disfavour. When at length Zachariah appeared he could not speak; and it was evident that in some mysterious manner he had been struck dumb, and to the anxious inquiries he could only make known by signs that something awful and unusual had taken place within the sanctuary. At what period he made his full relation of the wonderful fact which had occurred does not appear; but it was a relation of absorbing interest both to the aged man himself, who, although his wife was far advanced in years, was to be blessed with offspring; and to the whole people, as indicating the fulfilment of one of the preliminary signs which were universally accredited as precursive of the Messiah.

Vision of  
Zachariah.

In the vision of Zachariah, he had beheld an angel standing on the right side of the altar, who announced that his prayer was heard (1), and that his barren house was to be blessed; that his aged wife should bear a son, and that son be consecrated from his birth to the service of God, and observe the strictest austerity; that he was to revive the decaying spirit of religion, unite the disorganised nation, and above all, should appear as the expected harbinger, who was to precede and prepare the way for the approaching Redeemer. The angel proclaimed himself to be the messenger of God (Gabriel), and both as a punishment for his incredulity, and a sign of the certainty of the promise, Zachariah was struck dumb, but with an assurance that the affliction should remain only till the accomplishment of the divine prediction in the birth of his son (2). If, as has been said, the vision of Zachariah was in any manner communicated to the assembled people (though the silence of the

(1) Grotius and many other writers are of opinion that by this is meant, not the prayer of Zachariah for offspring, but the general national prayer, offered by him in his ministerial function, for the appearance of the Messiah.

(2) According to Josephus, Ant. xiii. 18. Hyrcanus, the high-priest heard a voice from heaven, while he was offering on the altar of incense.



evangelist makes strongly against any such supposition), or even to his kindred the officiating priesthood, it would no doubt have caused a great sensation, falling in, as it would, with the prevailing tone of the public mind. For it was the general belief that some messenger would, in the language of Isaiah, “prepare the way of the Lord;” and the last words which had, as it were, sealed the book of prophecy, intimated, as many supposed, the *personal* re-appearance of Elijah, the greatest, and, in popular opinion, a sort of representative of the whole prophetic community. The ascetic life to which the infant prophet was to be dedicated, according to the Nazaritish vow of abstinence from all wine or strong drink, was likewise a characteristic of the prophetic order, which, although many, more particularly among the Essenes, asserted their inspired knowledge of futurity, was generally considered to have ceased in the person of Malachi, the last whose oracles were enrolled in the sacred canon (1).

It does not appear that dumbness was a legal disqualification for the sacerdotal function, for Zachariah remained among his brethren, the priests, till their week of ministration ended. He then returned to his usual residence in the southern part of Judæa most probably in the ancient and well-known city of Hebron (2), which was originally a Levitical city; and although the sacerdotal order do not seem to have resumed the exclusive possession of their cities at the return from the captivity, it might lead the priestly families to settle more generally in those towns; and Hebron, though of no great size, was considered remarkably populous in proportion to its extent. The divine promise began to be accomplished; and during the five first months of her pregnancy, Elizabeth, the wife of Zachariah, concealed herself, either avoiding the curious inquiries of her neighbours in these jealous and perilous times, or in devotional retirement, rendering thanks to the Almighty for the unexpected blessing (3).

Return of  
Zachariah  
to Hebron.

It was on a far less public scene, that the birth of Christ, of whom the child of Zachariah was to be the harbinger, was announced to the Virgin Mother. The families which traced their descent from the house of David had fallen into poverty and neglect. When, after the return from the Babylonian captivity, the sovereignty had been assumed, first by the high-priests of Levitical descent, subsequently by the Asmonean family, who were likewise of the priestly

Annuncia-  
tion.

(1) The mythic interpreters (see Strauss, p. 138.) assert that this “short poem,” as they call it, was invented out of the passages in the Old Testament, relating to the births of Isaac, Samson, and Samuel, by a Judaizing Christian, while there were still genuine followers of John the Baptist, in order to conciliate them to Christianity. This is admitting very high antiquity of the passage; and unless it coincided with their own

traditions, was it likely to have any influence upon that sect?

(2) Yet, as there seems no reason why the city of Hebron should not be named, many of the most learned writers, Valesius, Reland, Harremberg, Kuinoel, have supposed that Jutta (the name of a small city) is the right reading, which, being little known, was altered into a city (of) Judah.

(3) Luke, i. 23—25.

line, and finally, by the house of Herod, of Idumean origin, but engrafted into the Maccabean line by the marriage of Herod with Mariamne, it was the most obvious policy to leave in the obscurity into which they had sunk, that race which, if it should produce any pretendant of the least distinction, he might advance an hereditary claim, as dear to the people as it would be dangerous to the reigning dynasty. The whole descendants of the royal race seem to have sunk so low, that even the popular belief, which looked to the line of David, as that from which the Messiah was to spring (1), did not invest them with sufficient importance to awaken the jealousy or suspicion of the rulers. Joseph, a man descended from this royal race, had migrated, for some unknown reason, to a distance from the part of the land inhabited by the tribe of Benjamin, to which, however, they were still considered to belong. He settled in Nazareth, an obscure town in Lower Galilee, which, independent of the general disrepute in which the whole of the Galilean provinces were held by the inhabitants of the more holy district of Judæa, seems to have been marked by a kind of peculiar proverbial contempt. Joseph had been betrothed to a virgin of his own race, named Mary, but according to Jewish usage, some time was to elapse between the betrothment and the espousals. In this interval took place the annunciation of the divine conception to the Virgin (2). In no part is the singular simplicity of the Gospel narrative more striking than in the relation of this incident; and I should be inclined, for this reason alone, to reject the notion that these chapters were of a later date (3). So early does that remarkable characteristic of the evangelic writings develope itself; the manner in which they relate, in the same calm and equable tone, the most extraordinary and most trivial events; the apparent absence either of wonder in the writer, or the desire of producing a strong effect on the mind of the reader (4). To illustrate this, no passage can be more striking than the account of her vision,—"And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail thou that art highly favoured, the

(1) This opinion revived so strongly in the time of Domitian, as, according to the Christian historian, to awaken the apprehension of the Roman emperor, who commanded diligent search to be made for all who claimed descent from the line of David. It does not appear how many were discovered, as Eusebius relates the story merely for the purpose of showing that the descendants of our Lord's brethren were brought before the emperor, and dismissed as simple labourers, too humble to be regarded with suspicion. Many families of this lineage may have perished in the exterminating war of Titus, between the birth of Christ and this inquiry of Domitian. In later times the Prince of the Captivity, with what right it would be impossible to decide, traced his descent from the line of the ancient kings. Conf. Casaubon, Exercit. anti-Baron, ii. p. 17.

(2) Luke, i. 26. 38.

(3) I cannot discover any great force in the critical arguments adduced to disjoin these preliminary chapters from the rest of the narrative. There is a very remarkable evidence of their authenticity in the curious apocryphal book (the *Ascensio Isaia*, published from the Ethiopic by Archbishop Lawrence). Compare Gesenius, *Jesaias*, Einleitung, p. 50. This writing marks its own date, the end of the reign of Nero, with unusual certainty, and contains distinct allusions to these facts, as forming integral parts of the life of Christ. The events were no doubt treasured in the memory of Mary, and might by her be communicated to the apostles.

(4) I may be in error, but this appears to me the marked and perceptible internal difference between the genuine and apocryphal gospels. The latter are *mythic*, not merely in the matter but also in their style.

Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary : for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name *Jesus*. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest : and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David : and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee : therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age ; and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. ”

The incarnation of the Deity, or the union of some part of the Divine Essence with a material or human body, is by no means an uncommon religious notion, more particularly in the East. Yet, in the doctrine as subsequently developed by Christianity, there seems the same important difference which characterises the whole system of the ancient and modern religions. It is in the former a mythological impersonation of the Power, in Christ it is the Goodness of the Deity, which, associating itself with a human form, assumes the character of a representative of the human race ; in whose person is exhibited a pure model of moral perfection, and whose triumph over evil is by the slow and gradual progress of enlightening the mind, and softening and purifying the heart. The moral purpose of the descent of the Deity is by no means excluded in the religions, in which a similar notion has prevailed, as neither is that of divine power, though confining itself to acts of pure beneficence, from the Christian scheme. This seems more particularly the case, if we may state any thing with certainty concerning those half-mythological, half-real personages, the Buddh, Gautama, or Somanas Codomo of the remoter East (1). In these systems likewise the overbearing excess of human wickedness demands the interfe-

Incarnation of the Deity.

(1) The characteristic of the Buddhist religion, which in one respect may be considered (I deprecate misconstruction) the Christianity of the remoter East, seems an union of political with religious reformation; its end to substitute purer morality for the wild and multifarious idolatry into which Brahminism had degenerated, and to break down the distinction of castes. But Buddhism appears to be essentially monastic ; and how different the superstitious regard for life in

the Buddhist from the enlightened humanity of Christianity! See Mahony, in *Asiat. Research.* vii. p. 40.

M. Klaproth has somewhere said, that, “ next to the Christian, no religion has contributed more to ennoble the human race than the Buddhist religion.” Compare likewise the very judicious observations of Wm. Humboldt, *über die Kawi Sprache*, p. 95.



rence, and the restoration of a better order of things is the object, which vindicates the presence of the embodied Deity; yet there is invariably a greater or less connection with the oriental cosmogonical systems; it is the triumph of mind over matter, the termination of the long strife between the two adverse principles. The Christian scheme, however it may occasionally admit the current language of the time, as where Christ is called the "Light of the World," yet in its scope and purport stands clear and independent of all these physical notions: it is original, inasmuch as it is purely, essentially, and exclusively a moral revelation; its sole design to work a moral change; to establish a new relation between man and the Almighty Creator, and to bring to light the great secret of the immortality of man.

Birth from  
a virgin.

Hence the only deviation from the course of nature was the birth of this Being from a pure virgin (1). Much has been written on this subject; but it is more consistent with our object to point out the influence of this doctrine upon the human mind, as hence its harmony with the general design of Christianity becomes more manifest.

We estimate very inadequately the influence or the value of any religion, if we merely consider its dogmas, its precepts, or its opinions. The impression it makes, the emotions it awakens, the sentiments which it inspires, are perhaps its most vital and effective energies: from these men continually act; and the character of a particular age is more distinctly marked by the predominance of these silent but universal motives, than by the professed creed, or prevalent philosophy, or in general, by the opinions of the times. Thus, none of the primary facts in the history of a widely-extended religion can be without effect on the character of its believers. The images perpetually presented to the mind, work, as it were, into its

(1) According to a tradition known in the West, at an early period, and quoted by Jerom (*Adv. Jovin.* c. 26.), Budh was born of a virgin. So were the Fohi of China and the Schaka of Thibet, no doubt the same whether a mythic or a real personage. The Jesuits in China were appalled at finding in the mythology of that country, the counterpart of the "Virgo Deipara." (*Barrow's Travels in China*, i.) There is something extremely curious in the appearance of the same religious notions in remote, and apparently quite disconnected countries, where it is impossible to trace the secret manner of their transmission. Certain incidents, for example, in the history of the Indian Crishna are so similar to those of the life of Christ, that De Guignaut is almost inclined to believe that they are derived from some very early Christian tradition. In the present instance, however, the peculiar sanctity attributed to virginity in all countries, where the ascetic principle is held in high honour as approximating the pure and passionless human being to the Divinity, might suggest such an origin for a Deity in human form. But the birth of Budh seems purely mythic: he was born from Maia, the virgin goddess of the imaginative

world—as it were the Phantasia of the Greeks who was said by some to have given birth to Homer. The Schaka of Thibet was born from, the nymph Lhamoghinpral. *Georgi. Alph. Tibet. Compare Rosenmuller, das Alte und Neue Morgenland*, v. iv.; on Budh and his birth, *Bohlen*, i. 312.

I am inclined to think that the Jews, though partially orientalised in their opinions, were the people among whom such a notion was least likely to originate of itself. Marriage by the mass of the people was considered in a holy light; and there are traces that the hopes of becoming the mother of the Messiah, was one of the blessings which, in their opinion, belonged to marriage; and after all, before we admit the originality of these notions in some of the systems to which they belong, we must ascertain (the most intricate problem in the history of Eastern religious opinions) their relative antiquity, as compared with the Nestorian Christianity, so widely prevalent in the East, and the effects of this form of Christianity on the more remote Oriental creeds, Jerome's testimony is the most remarkable.

most intimate being, become incorporated with the feelings, and thus powerfully contribute to form the moral nature of the whole race. Nothing could be more appropriate than that the martial Romans should derive their origin from the nursling of the wolf, or from the god of war ; and whether those fables sprung from the national temperament, or contributed to form it, however these fierce images were enshrined in the national traditions, they were at once the emblem and example of that bold and relentless spirit which gradually developed itself, until it had made the Romans the masters of the world. The circumstances of the birth of Christ were as strictly in unison with the design of the religion. This incident seemed to incorporate with the general feeling the deep sense of holiness and gentleness, which was to characterise the followers of Jesus Christ. It was the consecration of sexual purity and maternal tenderness. No doubt by falling in, to a certain degree, with the ascetic spirit of Oriental enthusiasm, the former incidentally tended to confirm the sanctity of celibacy, which for so many ages reigned paramount in the church ; and in the days in which the Virgin Mother was associated with her divine Son in the general adoration, the propensity to this worship was strengthened by its coincidence with the better feelings of our nature, especially among the female sex. Still the substitution of these images for such as formed the symbols of the older religions, was a great advance towards that holier and more humane tone of thought and feeling, with which it was the professed design of the new religion to embue the mind of man (1).

In the marvellous incidents which follow, the visit of the Virgin Mother to her cousin (2) Elizabeth (3), when the joy occasioned by the miraculous conception seemed to communicate itself to the child of which the latter was pregnant, and called forth her ardent expressions of homage : and in the Magnificat, or song of thanksgiving, into which, like Hannah in the older Scriptures, the Virgin broke forth, it is curious to observe how completely and exclusively consistent every expression appears with the state of belief at that period ; all is purely Jewish, and accordant with the prevalent expectation of the national Messiah (4) : there is no word which seems to imply any acquaintance with the unworldly and purely moral na-

Visit to  
Elizabeth.

(1) The poetry of this sentiment is beautifully expressed by Wordsworth :—

Mother! whose virgin bosom was uncrest  
With the least shade or thought to sin allied;  
Woman, above all women glorified,  
O'er-tainted Nature's solitary boast:  
Purer than foam on central ocean tost,  
Brighter than Eastern skies at daybreak strewn  
With forced roses, than th' unblemish'd moon  
Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast.  
Thy image falls to earth. Yet sure, I ween,  
Not unforgiven the suppliant here might bend,  
As to a visible power, in whom did blend  
All that was mixed and reconciled in thee  
Of mother's love, and maiden purity,  
Of high with low, celestial with terrene.

(2) Elizabeth must have been further removed than a first cousin, for as it is clear that Mary, as well as her husband, were of the line of David, and Elizabeth of the priestly line, the connection must have been formed in a preceding generation.

(3) Luke, i. 39. 56.

(4) Agreeing so far, as the fact, with Strauss, I should draw a directly opposite inference, the high improbability that this remarkable *keeping*, this pure Judaism, without the intervention of Christian notions, should have been maintained, if this passage had been invented or composed after the complete formation of the Christian scheme.

ture of the redemption, which was subsequently developed. It may perhaps appear too closely to press the terms of that which was the common, almost the proverbial, language of the devotional feelings : yet the expressions which intimate the degradation of the mighty from their seat, the disregard of the wealthy, the elevation of the lowly and the meek, and respect to the low estate of the poor, sound not unlike an allusion to the rejection of the proud and splendid royal race, which had so long ruled the nation, and the assumption of the throne of David by one born in a more humble state (1).

Birth of  
John the  
Baptist.

After the return of Mary to Nazareth, the birth of John the Baptist excited the attention of the whole of Southern Judæa to the fulfilment of the rest of the prediction. When the child is about to be named, the dumb father interferes ; he writes on a tablet the name by which he desires him to be called, and instantaneously recovers his speech (2). It is not unworthy of remark, that in this hymn of thanksgiving, the part which was to be assigned to John in the promulgation of the new faith, and his subordination to the unborn Messiah, are distinctly announced. Already, while one is but a new-born infant, the other scarcely conceived in the womb of his mother, they have assumed their separate stations : the child of Elizabeth is announced as the prophet of the Highest, who shall go “ before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways.” Yet even here the Jewish notion predominates : the first object of the Messiah’s coming, is that the children of Israel “ should be saved from their enemies and from the hand of all that hate them ; that they being delivered from the hand of their enemies, might serve him without fear (3).”

Journey to  
Bethle-  
hem.

As the period approaches at which the child of Mary is to be born, an apparently fortuitous circumstance summons both Joseph and the Virgin Mother from their residence in the unpopular town of Nazareth, in the province of Galilee, to Bethlehem, a small village to the south of Jerusalem (4). Joseph on the discovery of the pregnancy of his betrothed, being a man of gentle (5) character, had been willing to spare her the rigorous punishment enacted by the law in such cases, and determined on a private dissolution of the marriage (6). A vision however warned him of the real state of the

(1) Neander in his recently published work has made similar observations on the Jewish notions in the song of Simeon. *Leben Jesu*, p. 26.

(2) Luke, i. 57. 80.

(3) Even the expression the “ remission of sins,” which to a Christian ear may bear a different sense, to the Jew would convey a much narrower meaning. All calamity being a mark of the divine displeasure, was an evidence of sin ; every mark of divine favour therefore an evidence of divine forgiveness. The expression is frequently used in its Jewish sense in the book of Maccabees. 1 Macc. iii. 8. ; 2 Macc. viii. 5. 27. and 29. ; vii. 98. Le Clerc has made a similar observation (note in loc.) but is opposed by Whitty, who however does not appear to

have been very profoundly acquainted with Jewish phraseology.

(4) Matt. i. 18. 25.

(5) Grotius, in loc. from Chrysostom.

(6) A bill of divorce was necessary, even when the parties were only betrothed, and where the marriage had not actually been solemnised. It is probable that the Mosaic law, which in such cases adjudged a female to death (Deut. xx 23—25.), was not at this time executed in its original rigour. It appears from Abarbanel (Buxtorf, de Divort.) that in certain cases a betrothed maiden might be divorced without stating the cause in the bill of divorce. This is the meaning of the word *ḥalṣā*, secretly. Grotius, in loc.



case, and he no longer hesitated, though abstaining from all connection, to take her to his home; and accordingly, being of the same descent, she accompanied him to Bethlehem. This town, as the birthplace of David, had always been consecrated in the memory of the Jews with peculiar reverence; and no prediction in the Old Testament appears more distinct, than that which assigns for the nativity of the great Prince, who was to perpetuate the line of David, the same town which had given birth to his royal ancestor (1).

The decree of the Emperor Augustus (2), in obedience to which the whole population of Palestine was to be enrolled and registered, has been, and still remains, an endless subject of controversy (3). One point seems clear, that the enrolment must have been of the nature of a population census; for any property, possessed by Joseph or Mary, must have been at Nazareth; and the enrolment, which seems to have included both husband and wife, was made at the place where the genealogical registers of the tribes were kept. About this period Josephus gives an account of an oath of allegiance and of fidelity, to Cæsar and to the interests of the reigning sovereign, which was to be taken by the whole Jewish nation. The affair of this oath is strangely mingled up with predictions of a change of dynasty, and with the expected appearance of a great king, under whose all powerful reign the most extraordinary events were to take place. Six thousand of the Pharisees, the violent religious party, resolutely refused to take the oath. They were fined, and their fine discharged by the low-born wife of Pheroras, the brother of Herod, into whose line certain impostors or enthusiasts, pretending to the gift of prophecy, had declared that the succession was to pass (4). An eunuch, Bagoas, to whom they had promised peculiar and miraculous advantages during the reign of the great predicted king (5), was implicated in this conspiracy, and suffered death, with many of the

Decree of  
Augustus.

(1) Micah, v. 2.

(2) Luke, ii. 1. 7.

(3) The great difficulty arises from the introduction of the name of Cyrenius as the governor, under whose direction the enrolment, or, as it is no doubt mistranslated in our version, the taxation, took place. But it is well known that Cyrenius did not become governor of Syria till several years later. The most usual way of accounting for this difficulty, adopted by Lardner and Paley, is the natural one of supposing that Cyrenius conducted the transaction, while holding a subordinate situation in the province, of which he afterwards became governor, and superintended a more regular taxation. But Mr. Greswell has recently adduced strong reasons for questioning whether Cyrenius could have been at this time in Palestine; and I agree with him, that such a census must have been made by the native authorities under Herod. The alternative remains either to suppose some error in the Gospel of St. Luke, as it now stands; or to adopt another version. That followed by Mr. Greswell, notwithstanding his *apparent* authorities, sounds to me quite irreconcilable with the genius of the Greek language. There cannot perhaps be

found a more brief and satisfactory summary of the different opinions on this subject, than in the common book, *Elsley's Annotations on the Gospels*. Tholuck, in his answer to Strauss, has examined the question at great length, pp. 162—198. Neander fairly admits the possibility of a mistake in a point of this kind, on the part of the Evangelists, *Leben Jesu*, p. 19. With him I am at a loss to conceive how Dr. Strauss can imagine a myth in such a plain prosaic sentence.

(4) Though inclined to agree with Lardner in supposing that the census or population-return mentioned by St. Luke was connected with the oath of fidelity to Augustus and to Herod, I cannot enter into his notion, that the whole circumstantial and highly credible statement of Josephus is but a maliciously disguised account of the incidents which took place at the birth of Christ. Lardner's *Works*, vol. i. (4to edit.) p. 152.

(5) Independent of the nature of this promise, on which I am intentionally silent, the text of Josephus (*Ant.* xvii. 2. 6.) is unintelligible as it stands, nor is the emendation, proposed by Ward, a friend of Lardner's, though ingenious, altogether satisfactory. *Ibid.*

obstinate Pharisees and of Herod's kindred. It is highly probable that the administration of the oath of allegiance in Josephus, and the census in St. Luke, belong to the same transaction ; for if the oath was to be taken by all the subjects of Herod, a general enrolment would be necessary throughout his dominions ; and it was likely, according to Jewish usage, that this enrolment would be conducted according to the established divisions of the tribes (1). If however the expectation of the Messiah had penetrated even into the palace of Herod ; if it had been made use of in the intrigues and dissensions among the separate branches of his family ; if the strong religious faction had not scrupled to assume the character of divinely-inspired prophets, and to proclaim an immediate change of dynasty, the whole conduct of Herod, as described by the evangelists, harmonises in a most singular manner with the circumstances of the times. Though the birth of Jesus might appear to Herod but as an insignificant episode in the more dangerous tragic plot which was unfolding itself in his own family, yet his jealous apprehension at the very name of a new-born native king, would seize at once on the most trifling cause of suspicion ; and the judicial massacre of many of the most influential of the Pharisees, and of his own kindred in Jerusalem, which took place on the discovery of this plot, was a fitting prelude for the slaughter of all the children under a certain age in Bethlehem.

Birth of  
Christ.

But whether the enrolment, which summoned Joseph and Mary to the town where the registers of their descent were kept, was connected with this oath of fidelity to the emperor and the king ; or whether it was only a population-return, made by the command of the emperor, in all the provinces where the Roman sovereignty or influence extended (2), it singularly contributed to the completion of the prophecy to which we have alluded, which designated the city of David as the birth-place of the Messiah. Those who claimed descent from the families, whose original possessions were in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, crowded the whole of the small town ; and in the stable of the inn or caravansera was born **THE CHILD**, whose moral doctrines, if adopted throughout the world, would destroy more than half the misery by destroying all the vice and mutual hostility of men ; and who has been for centuries considered the object of adoration, as the Divine Mediator between God and man, by the most civilised and enlightened nations of the earth. Of

(1) The chronological difficulties in this case do not appear to me of great importance, as the whole affair of the oath may have occupied some time, and the enrolment may have taken place somewhat later in the provinces than in the capital.

(2) This view is maintained by Tholuck, and seems to receive some support from the high authority of Savigny, writing on another subject : it is supported by two passages of late

writers, Isidore and Cassiodorus. Augusti siquidem temporibus orbis Romanus agris divisus censuque descriptus est, ut possessio sua nulli haberetur incerta, quam pro tributorum susceperat quantitate solvenda. Of itself the authority of Cassiodorus, though a sensible writer, would have no great weight ; but he may have read many works unknown to us on this period of history, of which we possess singularly imperfect information.

this immediate epoch only one incident is recorded ; but in all the early history of Christianity, nothing is more beautiful, nor in more perfect unison with the future character of the religion, than the first revelation of its benign principles, by voices from heaven to the lowly shepherds (1). The proclamation of "Glory to God, Peace on earth and good will towards men," is not made by day, but in the quiet stillness of the night (2) ; not in the stately temple of the ancient worship, but among the peaceful pastures ; not to the religious senate of the Jewish people, or to the priesthood arrayed in all the splendour of public ministration, but to peasants employed on their lowly occupation (3).

In eight days, according to the law, the child was initiated into the race of Abraham, by the rite of circumcision : and when the forty days of purification, likewise appointed by the statute, are over, the Virgin Mother hastens to make the customary presentation of the first-born male in the temple. Her offering is that of the poorer Jewish females, who, while the more wealthy made an oblation of a lamb, were content with the least costly, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons (4). Only two persons are recorded as having any knowledge of the future destiny of the child, Anna, a woman endowed with a prophetic character, and the aged Simeon. That Simeon (5) was not the celebrated master of the schools of Jewish learning, the son of Hillel, and the father of Gamaliel, is fairly inferred from the silence of St. Luke, who, though chiefly writing for the Greek converts, would scarcely have omitted to state distinctly the testimony of so distinguished a man to the Messiahship of Jesus. There are other insurmountable historical objections (6). Though occurrences among the more devout wor-

(1) Luke ii. 8. 20.

(2) Neander has well observed that the modesty of this quiet scene is not in accordance with what might be expected from the fertility and boldness of mythic invention.

(3) The year in which Christ was born is still contested. There is still more uncertainty concerning the time of the year, which learned men are still labouring to determine. Where there is and can be no certainty, it is the wisest course to acknowledge our ignorance, and not to claim the authority of historic truth for that which is purely conjectural. The two ablest modern writers who have investigated the chronology of the life of Christ, Dr. Burton and Mr. Greswell, have come to opposite conclusions, one contending for the spring, the other for the autumn. Even if the argument of either had any solid ground to rest on, it would be difficult (would it be worth while ?) to extirpate the traditionary belief, so beautifully embodied in Milton's Hymn :—

It was the winter wild  
When the heaven born child, etc.

Were the point of the least importance, we should, no doubt, have known more about it. Quid tandem refert annum et diem exorti luminis ignorare, quam apparuisse illud, et cæcis hominum mentibus illuxisse constet, neque sit, quod obsistat nobis, ut splendore ac calore ejus utamur.

mur.—Mosheim. There is a good essay in the *Opuscula* of Jablonski, iii. 317. on the origin of the festivity of Christmas Day.

(4) Luke ii. 21. 39.

(5) This was the notion of Lightfoot, who, though often invaluable as interpreting the New Testament from Jewish usages, is sometimes misled by his Rabbiniism into fanciful analogies and illustrations. *Hist. Jews*, iii. 97. note.

(6) Our first and not least embarrassing difficulty in harmonising the facts recorded in the several Gospels, is the relative priority of the presentation in the temple and the visit of the Magians to Bethlehem. On one side there appears no reason for the return of the parents and the child, after the presentation, to Bethlehem, where they appear to have had no friends, and where the object of their visit was most probably effected : on the other hand, it is still more improbable, that, after the visit of the Magians, they should rush, as it were, into the very jaws of danger, by visiting Jerusalem, after the jealousy of Herod was awakened. Yet in both cases, it should be remembered that Bethlehem was but six miles, or two hours' journey, from Jerusalem. *Reland, Palestina*, p. 424. See, on one side, Schleiermacher's Essay on St. Luke, p. 47. though I entirely dissent on this point from the explanation of this author, on the other, Hug's Introduction.



Simeon.

shippers in the temple, were perhaps less likely to reach the ear of Herod than those in any other part of the city, yet it was impossible that the solemn act of recognising the Messiah in the infant son of Mary, on so public a scene, by a man whose language and conduct was watched by the whole people, could escape observation. Such an acknowledgment, by so high an authority, would immediately have been noised abroad; no prudence could have suppressed the instantaneous excitement. Besides this, if alive at this time, Simeon, Ben Hillel, would have presided in the court of inquiry, summoned by Herod, after the appearance of the Magi. The most remarkable point in the benediction of Simeon is the prediction that the child, who it would have been supposed would have caused unmingled pride and joy, should also be the cause of the deepest sorrow to his mother; and of the most fearful calamities, as well as of glory, to the nation (1).

His benediction.

The Magi.

The intercommunion of opinions between the Jewish and Zoroastrian religions throws great light on the visit of the Magi, or Wise Men, to Jerusalem. The impregnation of the Jewish notions about the Messiah with the Magian doctrines of the final triumph of Ormusd, makes it by no means improbable that, on the other side, the national doctrines of the Jews may have worked their way into the popular belief of the East, or at least into the opinions of those among the Magian hierarchy, who had come more immediately into contact with the Babylonian Jews (2). From them they may have adopted the expectation of the Great Principle of Light in a human form, and descending, according to ancient prophecy, from the race of Israel: and thus have been prepared to set forth, at the first appearance of the luminous body, by which they were led to Judæa (3). The universal usage of the East, never to approach the presence of a superior, particularly a sovereign, without some precious gift, is naturally exemplified in their costly but portable offerings of gold, myrrh, and frankincense (4).

The appearance of these strangers in Jerusalem at this critical

(1) Matt. ii. 1—12.

(2) The communication with Babylonia at this period was constant and regular; so much so, that Herod fortified and garrisoned a strong castle, placed under a Babylonian commander, to protect the caravans from this quarter from the untameable robbers of the Trachonitis, the district east of the Jordan and of the sea of Tiberias.

(3) What this luminous celestial appearance was has been debated with unwearied activity. I would refer more particularly to the work of Ideler, *Handbuch der Chronologie*, ii. 399. There will be found, very clearly stated, the opinion of Kepler (adopted by bishop Munter), which explains it as a conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn.

For my own part, I cannot understand why the words of St. Matthew, relating to such a subject, are to be so rigidly interpreted; the same latitude of expression may be allowed on astronomi-

cal subjects, as necessarily must be in the Old Testament. The vagueness and uncertainty, possibly the scientific inaccuracy, seem to me the inevitable consequences of the manner in which such circumstances must have been preserved, as handed down, and subsequently reduced to writing by simple persons, awe-struck under such extraordinary events.

(4) It is the general opinion that the Magi came from Arabia. Pliny and Ptolemy (Grotius, in Loc.) name Arabian Magi; and the gifts were considered the produce of that country. But in fact gold, myrrh, and frankincense, are too common in the East, and too generally used as presents to a superior, to indicate, with any certainty, the place from whence they came. If, indeed, by Arabia he meant not the peninsula, but the whole district reaching to the Euphrates, this notion may be true: but it is more probable that they came from beyond the Euphrates.

period, particularly if considered in connection with the conspiracy in the family of Herod and among the religious faction, as it excited an extraordinary sensation through the whole city, would re-awaken all the watchfulness of the monarch. The assemblage of the religious authorities, in order that they might judicially declare the place from which the Messiah was expected, might be intended not merely to direct the ministers of the royal vengeance to the quarter from whence danger was to be apprehended, but to force the acknowledged interpreters of the sacred writings to an authoritative declaration as to the circumstances of the Messiah's birth; so, if any event should occur, contrary to their version of the prophecies, either to commit them on the side of the ruling powers, or altogether to invalidate the expectation, that was dangerously brooding in the popular mind. The subtlety of Herod's character is as strikingly exhibited in his pretended resolution to join the Magians in their worship of the new-born king, as his relentless decision, when the Magians did not return to Jerusalem, in commanding the general massacre of all the infants under the age of two years, in Bethlehem and its district (1).

Magi in  
Jerusalem.

Egypt, where, by divine command, the parents of Jesus took refuge, was but a few days' journey, on a line perpetually frequented by regular caravans; and in that country, those who fled from Palestine could scarcely fail to meet with hospitable reception, among some of that second nation of Jews, who inhabited Alexandria and its neighbourhood (2).

Flight into  
Egypt.

On their return from Egypt, after the death of Herod, (which took place in the ensuing year, though the parents of Jesus did not leave Egypt till the accession of Archelaus), Joseph, justly appre-

Return to  
Galilee.

(1) The murder of the innocents is a curious instance of the re-action of legendary extravagance on the plain truth of the evangelic history. The Greek church canonised the 14,000 innocents; and another notion, founded on a misrepresentation of Revelations (xiv. 3.), swelled the number to 144,000. The former, at least, was the common belief of the church, though even in our liturgy the latter has in some degree been sanctioned, by retaining the chapter of Revelations as the epistle for the day. Even later, Jeremy Taylor, in his *Life of Christ*, admits the 14,000 without scruple, or rather without thought. The error did not escape the notice of the acute adversaries of Christianity, who, impeaching this extravagant tale, attempted to bring the evangelic narrative into discredit. Vossius, I believe, was the first divine who pointed out the monstrous absurdity of supposing such a number of infant children in so small a village. *Matth. ii. 13—18.*

(2) Some of the rabbinical stories accuse Jesus of having brought "his enchantments" out of Egypt. (*Lightfoot, xi. 45.*) There is no satisfactory evidence to the antiquity of these notions, or, absurd as they are, they might be some testimony to the authenticity of this part of the

Christian history. See also Eisenmenger, i. p. 150.

The Jewish fiction of the birth of Jesus is at least as old as the time of Celsus (*Origen contra Cels. 1.*), but bears the impress of hostile malice, in assigning as his parent a Roman soldier. This is the fable which was perpetuated from that time by Jewish animosity, till it assumed its most obnoxious form in the *Toldoth Jesu*. How much more natural and credible than the minute detail which so obviously betrays later and hostile invention, the vague inquiry of his own compatriots—"Is not this the carpenter's son?" *Matth. xiii. 55.*

The answer of Origen to this Jewish invention is sensible and judicious. The Christians, if such a story had been true, would have invented something more directly opposed to the real truth; they would not have agreed so far with the relation, but rather carefully suppressed every allusion to the extraordinary birth of Jesus. *Ἐδύνατο γὰρ ἄλλως ψευδοποιεῖσθαι διὰ τὸ σοῦδρα παράδοξον τὴν ἱστορίαν, καὶ μὴ ἀσπερεὶ ἀκουσίας συγκαταθέσθαι ὅτι οὐκ ἀπο συνηθῶν ἀνθρώποις γάμων ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐγενήθη.* *Contra Cels. i. 32.*

hensive that the son might inherit the jealousy and relentless disposition of the father, of which he had already given fearful indications, retired to his former residence in Galilee, under the less suspicious dominion of Herod Antipas (1). There the general prejudice against Galilee might be their best security ; and the universal belief that it was in Judæa that the great king was to assume his sovereignty, would render their situation less perilous ; for it was the throne of the monarch of Judah, the dominion of the ruler in Jerusalem, rather than the government of the Galilean tetrarch, which would have been considered in danger from the appearance of the Messiah.

(1) Matt. xi. 19. 23. Luke, xi. 40.



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER II.

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### I.

#### RECENT LIVES OF CHRIST.

AT the time when this part of the present work was written, the ultra-rationalist work of Professor Paulus, the *Leben Jesu*, (Heidelberg, 1828,) was the most recent publication. Since that time have appeared, the *Life of Jesus*, *Das Leben Jesu*, by Dr. D. F. Strauss, (2d edition, Tübingen, 1837) and the counter publication of Neander, *Das Leben Jesu* (Berlin, 1837); to say nothing of a great number of controversial pamphlets and reviews, arising out of the work of Dr. Strauss.

This work (consisting of two thick and closely printed volumes of nearly 800 pages each) is a grave and elaborate exposition of an extraordinary hypothesis, which Dr. Strauss offers, in order to reconcile Christianity with the advancing intelligence of mankind, which is weary and dissatisfied with all previous philosophical and rationalist theories. Dr. Strauss solemnly declares, that the essence of Christianity is entirely independent of his critical remarks. "The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, however *their reality, as historical facts, may be called in question* (1)." He refers to a dissertation at the close of his work, "to show that the doctrinal contents of the *Life of Jesus* are uninjured; and that the calmness and cold bloodedness with which his criticism proceeds in its dangerous operations can only be explained by his conviction, that it is not in the least prejudicial to Christian faith." That dissertation, which opens (t. ii. p. 691.) with a singularly eloquent description of the total destruction which this remorseless criticism has made in the ordinary grounds of Christian faith and practice, I have read with much attention. But what resting place it proposes to substitute for Christian faith, I have been unable to discover; and must acknowledge my unwillingness to abandon the firm ground of historical evidence, to place myself on any sublime but unsubstantial cloud which may be offered by a mystic and unintelligible philosophy. Especially as I find Dr. Strauss himself coolly contemplating at the close of his work the desolating effects of his own arguments, looking about in vain for the unsubstantial tenets which he has extirpated by his uncompromising logic; and plainly admitting, that if he has shattered to pieces the edifice of Christianity, it is not his fault.

But Christianity will survive the criticism of Dr. Strauss.

I would however calmly consider the first principles of this work, which appear to me, in many respects, singularly narrow and unphilosophical—by no means formed on an extensive and complete view of the whole case, and resting on grounds which, in my judgment, would be subversive of all history.

The hypothesis of Dr. Strauss is, that the whole history of our Lord, as related in the Gospels, is mythic, that is to say, a kind of imaginative amplification of certain vague and slender traditions, the germ of which it is now impossible to

(1) Christi übernatürliche Geburt, seine Wunder, seine Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt bleiben ewige Wahrheiten, so sehr ihre Wirklichkeit als historische Facta angezweifelt werden mag. Vorrede, xii.

trace. These myths are partly what he calls historical, partly philosophic, formed with the design of developing an ideal character of Jesus, and to harmonise that character with the Jewish notions of the Messiah. In order to prove this, the whole intermediate part of the work is a most elaborate, and it would be uncandid not to say, a singularly skilful examination of the difficulties and discrepancies in the Gospels; and a perpetual endeavour to show, in what manner and with what design, each separate myth assumed its present form.

Arguing on the ground of Dr. Strauss, I would urge the following objections, which appear to me fatal to his whole system: —

First, The hypothesis of Strauss is unphilosophical, because it assumes dogmatically the principal point in dispute. His first canon of criticism is (l. i. p. 103), that wherever there is any thing supernatural, angelic appearance, miracle, or interposition of the Deity, there we may presume a myth. Thus he concludes, both against the supernaturalists, as they are called in Germany, and the general mass of Christian believers of all sects in this country, that any recorded interference with the ordinary and experienced order of causation must be unhistorical and untrue; and even against the rationalists, that these wonders did not even *apparently* take place, having been supposed to be miraculous, from the *superstition* or ignorance of physical causes among the spectators: they cannot be even the honest, though mistaken, reports of eye-witnesses.

But secondly, The *belief* in some of those supernatural events, *e. g.* the resurrection, is indispensable to the existence of the religion; to suppose that this belief grew up, after the religion was formed; to assume these primary facts as after-thoughts, seems to me an absolute impossibility. But if they, or any one of them, were integral parts of the religion from its earliest origin, though they may possibly have been subsequently embellished, or unfaithfully recorded in the Gospels, their supernatural character is no evidence that they are so.

Thirdly, Besides this inevitable inference, that the religion could not have subsequently invented that which was the foundation of the religion, — that these things *must have been* the belief of the first Christian communities, — there is distinct evidence in the Acts of the Apostles, (though Dr. Strauss, it seems, would involve that book in the fate of the Gospels,) in the apostolical Epistles, and in every written document and tradition, that they were so. The general harmony of these three distinct classes of records, as to the main preternatural facts in the Gospels, proves incontestably that they were not the slow growth of a subsequent period, embodied in narratives composed in the second century.

For fourthly, Dr. Strauss has by no means examined the evidence for the early existence of the Gospels with the rigid diligence which characterises the rest of his work. I think he does not fairly state that the early notices of the Gospels, in the works of the primitive fathers, show not only their existence but their general reception among the Christian communities, which imply both a much earlier composition and some strong grounds for their authenticity. As to the time when the Gospels were composed, his argument seems to me self-destructive. The later he supposes them to have been written, the more impossible (considering that the Christians were then so widely disseminated in Europe and Asia) is their accordance with each other in the same design or the same motives for fiction: if he takes an earlier date, he has no room for his long process of mythic development. In one place he appears to admit that the three first, at least, must have been completed between the death of our Lord and the destruction of Jerusalem, less than forty years. (I myself consider their silence, or rather their obscure and confused prophetic allusions to that event, as absolutely decisive on this point, with regard to all the four.) But is it conceivable that in this narrow period, this mythic spirit should have been so prolific, and the primitive simplicity of the Christian history have been so embellished, and then universally received by the *first* generation of believers?

The place, as well as the period, of their composition, is encumbered with difficulties according to this system. Where were they written? If all, or rather the three first, in Palestine, whence their general acceptance without direct and acknowledged authority? If in different parts of the world, their general acceptance is equally improbable; their similarity of design and object, altogether unaccountable.

Were they written with this mythic latitude by Judaising or Hellenising Christians? If by Judaising I should expect to find far more of Judaism, of Jewish tradition, usage, and language, as appears to have been the case in the Ebionitish Gospel; if by Hellenising, the attempt to frame the myths in accordance with Jewish traditions is inconceivable (1). They Judaize too little for the Petrine Christians, (that is, those who considered the Gospel in some sort a re-enactment of the Mosaic law,) too much for the followers of St. Paul, who rejected the law.

The other canons of Dr. Strauss seem to me subversive of all history. Every thing extraordinary or improbable, the prophetic anticipations of youthful ambition, complete revolution in individual character, (he appears to allude to the change in the character of the apostles after the resurrection, usually, and in my opinion justly, considered as one of the strongest arguments of the truth of the narrative,) though he admits that this canon is to be applied with caution, are presumptive of a mythic character.

If discrepancies in the circumstances between narratives of the same events, or differences of arrangement in point of time, particularly among rude and inartificial writers, are to be admitted as proofs of this kind of fiction, all history is mythic; even the accounts of every transaction in the daily papers, which are never found to agree precisely in the minute details, are likewise mythic.

To these which appear to me conclusive arguments against the hypothesis of Dr. Strauss, I would add some observations, which to my mind are general maxims, which must be applied to all such discussions.

No religion is in its *origin* mythic. Mythologists embellish, adapt, modify, idealise, clothe in allegory or symbol, received and acknowledged truths. This is a later process, and addressed to the imagination, already excited and prepared to receive established doctrines or opinions in this new form. But in Christianity (according to Dr. Strauss's hypothesis) what was the first impulse, the germ of all this high-wrought and successful idealisation?—Nothing more than the existence of a man named Jesus, who obtained a few followers, and was put to death as a malefactor, without any pretensions on his part to a superior character, either as a divine or a divinely commissioned being, or as the expected Messiah of the Jews. Whatever extorted by the necessity of the case, is added to this primary conception of the character of Jesus, in order sufficiently to awaken the human mind to a new religion connected with his name, belief of his miraculous powers, of his resurrection, of his Messiahship, even of his more than human virtue and wisdom, tends to verify the delineation of his character in his Gospels, as the original object of admiration and belief to his followers; and to anticipate and preclude, as it were, its being a subsequent mythic invention.

Can the period in which Jesus appeared be justly considered a mythic age? If by mythic age (and I do not think Dr. Strauss very rigid and philosophical in the use of the term) be meant an age, in which there was a general and even superstitious belief, in wonders and prodigies, mingled up with much cool

(1) Dr. Strauss, for instance, asserts all the passages relating to the miraculous birth of Christ (the first chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke), and those which relate his baptism by St. John, to have proceeded from two distinct classes of Christians, differing materially, or rather directly opposed to each other in their

notions of the Messiah, a Judaising and an anti-docetic sect. See vol. i. pp. 446—448. We must find time not merely for the growth and development of both notions, but for their blending into one system, and the general adoption of that system by the Christian communities.



incredulity, this cannot be denied. The prodigies which are related by grave historians, as taking place at the death of Cæsar; those which Josephus, who is disposed to rationalise many of the miracles of the early history of his people, describes during the capture of Jerusalem, are enough, out of the countless instances which could be adduced, to determine the question. But if the term mythic be more properly applied to that idealisation, that investing religious doctrines in allegory or symbol; above all, that elevating into a deity a man only distinguished for moral excellence (the deification of the Roman emperors was a political act), this appears to me to be repugnant to the genius of the time and of the country. Among the Jewish traditions in the Talmud, there is much fable, much parable, much apologue; as far as I can discern, nothing strictly speaking mythic. Philo's is a kind of poetico-philosophic rationalism. The later legends, of Simon Magus, Alexander in Lucian, and Apollonius of Tyana, are subsequent inventions, after the imaginative impulse given by Christianity, possibly imitative of the Gospels (1).

I would be understood, however, as laying the least stress upon this argument, as this tendency to imaginative excitement and creation does not depend so much on the age as on the state of civilisation, which perhaps in the East, has never become completely exempt from this tendency.

But I cannot admit the spurious Gospels, which seem to me the manifest offspring of Gnostic and heretical sects, and to have been composed at periods which historical criticism might designate from internal evidence, though clearly *mythical*, to involve the genuine Gospels in the same proscription. To a discriminating and unprejudiced mind, I would rest the distinction between mythical and non-mythical on the comparison between the apocryphal and canonical Gospels.

Neander, in my opinion, has exercised a very sound judgment in declining direct controversy with Dr. Strauss; for controversy, even conducted in the calm and Christian spirit of Neander, rarely works conviction, except in those who are already convinced. He has chosen the better course of giving a fair and candid view of the opposite side of the question, and of exhibiting the accordance of the ordinary view of the origin and authority of the Gospels with sound reason and advanced philosophy. He has dissembled no difficulties, and appealed to no passions. It affords me much satisfaction to find that, although my plan did not require or admit of such minute investigation, I have anticipated many of the conclusions of Neander. In many respects the point of view, from which I have looked at the subject, is altogether different; and, as I have preferred to leave my own work in its original form, though some of the difficulties and discrepancies on which Dr. Strauss dwells may, I trust, be reasonably accounted for in the following chapters of my work, this will be only incidentally; the full counter-statement, prepared with constant reference to Dr. Strauss's book, must be sought in the work of Neander.

It accords even less with the design of my work, which is rather to trace the influence and effect of Christian opinions, than rigidly to investigate their origin or to establish their truth, to notice the various particular animadversions on Dr. Strauss which might suggest themselves; yet I have added some few observations on certain points, when they have crossed the course of my narrative.

The best answer to Strauss is to show that a clear, consistent, and probable narrative can be formed out of that of the four Gospels, without more violence, I will venture to say, than any historian ever found necessary to harmonise four contemporary chronicles of the same events; and with a general accordance with the history, customs, habits, and opinions of the times, altogether irreconcilable with the poetic character of mythic history.

(1) The nearest approach to the mythic, would, by Simon Magus among the Samaritans, and perhaps be the kind of divine character assumed included to in the Acts.

The inexhaustible fertility of German speculation has now displayed itself in another original and elaborate work, *Die Evangelische Geschichte, Kritisch und Philosophisch bearbeitet*, Von Ch. Hermann Weisse. 2 bände. Leipsic, 1838. Dr. Weisse repudiates the theory of Strauss. If he does not bring us to the cold and dreary conclusion of Strauss, or land us on the Nova Zembla of that writer, he leaves us enveloped in a vague and indistinct mist, in which we discern nothing clear, distinct, or satisfactory.

The critical system of Weisse rests on two leading points: — The assumption of the Gospel of St. Mark as the primitive gospel, — a theory which has been advanced before, but which no writer has wrought out with so much elaborate diligence as Weisse; — and an hostility which leads to the virtual rejection of the Gospel of St. John as almost entirely spurious. With regard to St. Mark's Gospel he receives the tradition of Papias, that it was written from the dictation, or at least from information obtained from St. Peter. St. Matthew's was formed from the incorporation of the Gospel of the Hebrews with the *λογια*, a collection of speeches attributed to our Lord. As to St. John's, he submits it to the test of his own arbitrary, and it appears to me, however they may be called critical, very narrow and unphilosophical laws of probability.

The theory by which Weisse would reconcile and harmonise what he retains of the evangelic history with what he considers the highest philosophy, I must confess my inability to comprehend, and must plead as my excuse, that he admits it to be unintelligible to those who are not acquainted with some of his former philosophical works, which I have not at my command. What I do comprehend it would be impossible to explain, as the philosophical language of Germany would, if retained, be entirely without meaning to most readers, and is untranslatable into a foreign tongue.

Weisse retains a much larger and more solid substratum of historic fact than Strauss; and though he may be called a mythic interpreter, his mythic system seems to me entirely different from that of Strauss. With the latter the historic facts are, in general, pure fictions, wrought out of preconceived Jewish notions; with Weisse they are symbolic rather than mythic. In some cases they arise from the mistake of symbolic action for real fact; as, for instance, the notion of the feeding the multitudes in the desert arose out of the mystic language of the Saviour, relating to spiritual nourishment by the bread of life. In other parts he adopts the language of Vico, which has found so much favour in Germany, but which I confess, when gravely applied to history, and followed out to an extent, I conceive, scarcely anticipated by its author, appears to me to be one of the most monstrous improbabilities which has ever passed current under the garb of philosophy. Individual historical characters are merely symbols of the age in which they live, — ideal personifications, as it were, of the imagination, without any actual or personal existence. Thus the elder Herod (Weisse is speaking of the massacre of the innocents) is the symbol, the representation of worldly power. And so the tyrant of the Jews is sublimated into an allegory.

Weisse, however, in his own *sense*, distinctly asserts the divinity of the religion and of our Lord himself.

I mention this book for several reasons, first, because, although it is written in a tone of bold, and, with us it would seem, presumptuous speculation, and ends, in my opinion, in a kind of unsatisfactory mysticism, it contains much profound and extremely beautiful thought.

Secondly, because in its system of interpretation it seems to me to bear a remarkable resemblance to that of Philo and the better part of the Alexandrian school, — it is to the New Testament, what they were to the Old.

Lastly, to show that the German mind itself has been startled by the conclusions, to which the stern and remorseless logic of Strauss has pushed on the historical criticism of rationalism; and that, even where there is no tendency to

return to the old system of religious interpretation, there is not merely strong discontent with the new, but a manifest yearning for a loftier and more consistent harmony between the religion of the Gospels and true philosophy, than has yet been effected by any of the remarkable writers, who have attempted this reconciliation.

## APPENDIX II.

### ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS.

THE question concerning the origin of the three first Gospels, both before and subsequent to the publication of Bishop Marsh's *Michaelis*, has assumed every possible form; and, it may be safely asserted, that no one victorious theory has gained any thing like a general assent among the learned. Every conceivable hypothesis has found its advocates; the priority of each of the Evangelists has been maintained with erudition and ingenuity; each has been considered the primary authority, which has been copied by the others. But the hypothesis of one or more common sources, from which all three derived their materials (the view supported with so much ingenuity and erudition by the Bishop of Peterborough), has in its turn shared the common fate.

This inexhaustible question, though less actively agitated, still continues to occupy the attention of biblical critics in Germany. I cannot help suspecting, that the best solution of this intricate problem lies near the surface (1). The incidents of the Saviour's life and death, the contents of the Gospels, necessarily formed a considerable part of the oral teaching, or, if not of the oral teaching, of oral communication, among the first propagators of Christianity (2). These incidents would be repeated and dwelt upon with different degrees of frequency and perhaps distinctness, according to their relative importance. While, on the one hand, from the number of teachers, scattered at least through Palestine, and probably in many other parts of the Roman empire, many varieties of expression, much of that unintentional difference of colouring which every narrative receives by frequent repetition, would unavoidably arise; on the other, there would be a kind of sanctity attributed to the precise expressions of the apostles, if recollected, which would insure on many points a similarity, a perfect identity, of language. We cannot suppose but that these incidents and events in the life of Christ, these parables and doctrines delivered by himself, thus orally communicated in the course of public teaching and in private, received with such zealous avidity, treasured as of such inestimable importance, would be perpetually written down, if not as yet in continuous narratives, in numerous and accumulating fragments, by the Christian community, or some

(1) It would be difficult to point out a clearer and more satisfactory exposition of any controversy, than that of this great question in biblical criticism, by Mr. Thirlwall in his preface to Schleiermacher's Essay on St. Luke.

(2) I have considered the objections urged by Hug, and more recently with great force by Weisse, (p. 20. et seq.) to this theory, the more important of which resolve themselves into the undoubted fact, that it was a *creed* and not a *history*, which, in all the accounts we have in the Acts of the Apostles and elsewhere, formed the subject of oral teaching. This is doubtless true, but, resting as the creed did upon the history, containing no doubt in its primitive form a very few simple articles, would it not necessarily

awaken curiosity as to the historic facts, and would not that curiosity demand, as it were, to be satisfied? The more belief warmed into piety, the more insatiably would it require, and the more would the teacher be disposed, to gratify this awakened interest and eagerness for information on every point that related to the Redeemer. The formal public teaching no doubt confined itself to the enforcement of the creed, and to combating Jewish or heathen objections, and confuting Judaism or idolatry. But in private intercourse, when the minds of both instructor or hearer were exclusively full of these subjects, would not the development of the history, in more or less detail, be a necessary and unavoidable consequence?



one or more distinguished members of it. They would record, as far as possible, the *ipsissima verba* of the primitive teacher, especially if an apostle or a personal follower of Jesus. But these records would still be liable to some inaccuracy, from misapprehension or infirmity of memory; and to some discrepancy, from the inevitable variations of language in oral instruction or communication frequently repeated, and that often by different teachers. Each community or church, each intelligent Christian would thus possess a more or less imperfect Gospel, which he would preserve with jealous care, and increase with zealous activity, till it should be superseded by some more regular and complete narrative, the authenticity and authority of which he might be disposed to admit. The evangelists who, like St. Luke, might determine to write in order, either to an individual like Theophilus, to some single church, or to the whole body of Christians, "those things which were most surely believed among them," would naturally have access to, would consult, and avail themselves of many of those private or more public collections. All the three, or any two, might find many coincidences of expression, (if indeed some expressions had not already become conventional and established, or even consecrated forms of language, with regard to certain incidents,) which they would transfer into their own narrative; on the other hand, incidents would be more or less fully developed, or be entirely omitted in some, while retained in others.

Of all points on which discrepancies would be likely to arise, there would be none so variable as the chronological order and consecutive series of events. The primitive teacher, or communicator, of the history of the life and death of Jesus, would often follow a doctrinal rather than an historical connection; and this would, in many instances, be perpetuated by those who should endeavour to preserve in writing that precious information communicated to them by the preacher. Hence the discrepancies and variations in order and arrangement, more especially, as it may be said without irreverence, these rude and simple historians, looking more to religious impression than to historic precision, may have undervalued the importance of rigid chronological narrative. Thus, instead of one or two primary, either received or unauthoritative, sources of the Gospels, I should conceive that there would be many, almost as many as there were Christian communities, all in themselves imperfect, but contributing more or less to the more regular and complete narratives extant in our Gospels. The general necessity, particularly as the apostles and first followers were gradually withdrawn from the scene, would demand a more full and accurate narrative; and these confessedly imperfect collections would fall into disuse, directly that the want was supplied by regular gospels, composed by persons either considered as divinely commissioned, or at least as authoritative and trustworthy writers. The almost universal acceptance of these Gospels is the guarantee for their general conformity with these oral, traditional, and written records of the different communities from which if they had greatly differed, they would probably have been rejected; while the same conformity sufficiently accounts for the greater or less fulness, the variation in the selection of incidents, the silence on some points, or the introduction of others, in one Gospel alone. Whether or not either of the evangelists saw the work of the other, they made constant use of the same or similar sources of information, not merely from the personal knowledge of the evangelists, but likewise from the general oral teaching and oral communications of the apostles and first preachers of Christianity, thus irregularly and incompletely, but honestly and faithfully, registered by the hearers. Under this view, for my own part, I seem rationally to avoid all embarrassment with the difficulties of the subject. I am not surprised at exact coincidences of thought or language, though followed by, or accompanied with, equally remarkable deviations and discrepancies. I perceive why one is brief and the other full; why one omits, while another details, minute circumstances. I can account for much apparent and some real discre-

pancy. I think that I discern, to my own satisfaction, sufficient cause for diversity in the collocation of different incidents : in short, admitting these simple principles, there flows a natural harmony from the whole, which blends and re-unites all the apparent discords which appear to disturb the minds of others.

There is one point which strikes me forcibly in all these minute and elaborate arguments, raised from every word and letter of the Gospels, which prevail throughout the whole of the modern German criticism. It is, that following out their rigid juridical examination, the most extreme rationalists are (unknowingly) influenced by the theory of the strict inspiration of the evangelists. Weisse himself has drawn very ably a distinction between juridical and historical truth, that is, the sort of legal truth which we should require in a court of justice, and that which we may expect from ordinary history. But in his own investigations he appears to me constantly to lose sight of this important distinction ; no cross-examination in an English court of law was ever so severe as that to which every word and shade of expression in the evangelists is submitted. Now this may be just in those who admit a rigid verbal inspiration ; but those who reject it, and consider the evangelists merely as ordinary historians, have no right to require more than ordinary historic accuracy. The evangelists were, either,—

I. Divinely inspired in their language and expressions as well as in the facts and doctrines which they relate. On this theory the inquirer may reasonably endeavour to harmonise discrepancies ; but if he fails, he must submit in devout reverence, and suppose that there is some secret way of reconciling such contradictions, which he wants acuteness or knowledge to comprehend.

II. We may adopt a lower view of inspiration, whether of suggestion or superintendence, or even that which seems to have been generally received in the early ages, the inflexible love of truth, which being inseparable from the spirit of Christianity, would of itself be a sufficient guarantee for fidelity and honesty. Under any of these notions of inspiration (the definition of which word is, in fact, the real difficulty), there would be much latitude for variety of expression, of detail, of chronological arrangement. Each narrative (as the form and the language would be uninspired) would bear marks of the individual character, the local circumstances, the education, the position of the writer.

III. We may consider the evangelists as ordinary historians, credible merely in proportion to their means of obtaining accurate knowledge, their freedom from prejudice, and the abstract credibility of their statements. If, however, so considered—as is invariably the case in the German school of criticism), they should undoubtedly have all the privileges of ordinary historians, and indeed of historians of a singularly rude and inartificial class. They would be liable to all the mistakes into which such writers might fall ; nor would trifling inaccuracies impeach the truth of their general narrative. Take, for instance, the introduction of Cyrenius, in relation to the census in the beginning of St. Luke's Gospel ; in common historical inquiry, it would be concluded that the author had made a mistake (1) as to the name, his general truth would remain unshaken, nor would any one think of building up an hypothesis on so trivial and

(1) Non nos debere arbitrari mentiri quemquam, si pluribus rem quam audierunt vel viderunt reminiscuntibus, non eodem modo atque eisdem verbis, eadem tamen res fuerit indicata : aut sive mutetur ordo verborum, sive alia pro alia, quæ tamen idem valeant, verba proferantur, sive aliquid vel quod recordanti non occurrat, vel quod ex aliis quæ dicuntur possit intelligi minus dicatur, sive aliorum quæ magis dicere statuit narrandorum gratiâ, ut congruus temporis modus sufficiat, aliquid sibi non totum explicandum, sed ex parte tangendum quisque suscipiat ; sive ad illuminandam declarandamque

sententiam, nihil quidem rerum, verborum tamen aliquid addat, cui auctoritas narrandi concessa est, sive rem bene tenens, non assequatur quamvis id conetur, memoriter etiam verba quæ audivit ad integrum enuntiare. Augustin. De Consens. Evangelist. ii. 28. Compare the whole passage, which coincides with the general view of the fathers as to this question, in c. 50. St. Augustine seems to admit an inspiration of guidance or superintendence. In one passage he seems to go farther, but to plunge (with respect be it spoken) into inextricable nonsense, iii. 30 ; see also 48.

natural an inaccuracy. But there is scarcely a work of this school without some such hypothesis. I confess that I am constantly astonished at the elaborate conclusions which are drawn from trifling discrepancies or inaccuracies in those writers, from whom is exacted a precision of language, a minute and unerring knowledge of facts incident to, but by no means forming constituent parts of, their narrative, which is altogether inconsistent with the want of respect in other cases shown to their authority. The Evangelists must have been either entirely inspired, or inspired as to the material parts of their history, or altogether uninspired. In the latter, and indeed in the more moderate view of the second case, they would have a right to the ordinary latitude of honest narrators; they would, we may safely say, be read, as other historians of their inartificial and popular character always are; and so read, it would be impossible, I conceive, not to be surprised and convinced of their authenticity, by their *general* accordance with all the circumstances of their age, country and personal character.

### APPENDIX III.

#### INFLUENCE OF THE MORE IMAGINATIVE INCIDENTS OF THE EARLY EVANGELIC HISTORY ON THE PROPAGATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE RELIGION.

A CURIOUS fact occurs to those who trace the progress of religious opinion, not merely in the popular theology, but in the works of those, chiefly foreign writers, who indulge in bolder speculations on these subjects. Many of these are men of the profoundest learning, and, it would be the worst insolence of uncharitableness to doubt, with the most sincere and ardent aspirations after truth. The fact is this: — Certain parts of the evangelic history, the angelic appearances, the revelations of the Deity addressed to the senses of man (the *Angelo-phaniai* and *Theophaniai*, as they have been called,) — with some, though not with all this class of writers, every thing miraculous appears totally inconsistent with historic truth. These incidents, being irreconcilable with our actual experience, and rendered suspicious by a multitude of later fictions, which are rejected in the mass by most Protestant Christians, cannot accord with the more subtle and fastidious intelligence of the present times. Some writers go so far as to assert that it is impossible that an inquiring and reasoning age should receive these supernatural facts as historical verities. But if we look back we find that precisely these same parts of the sacred narrative were dearest to the believers of a more imaginative age; and they are still dwelt upon by the general mass of Christians, with that kind of ardent faith, which refuses to break its old alliance with the imagination. It was by this very supernatural agency, if I may so speak, that the doctrines, the sentiments, the moral and religious influence of Christianity, were implanted in the mind, on the first promulgation of the Gospel, and the reverential feeling thus excited, most powerfully contributed to maintain the efficacy of the religion for at least seventeen centuries. That which is now to many incredible, not merely commanded the belief, but made the purely moral and spiritual part of Christianity, to which few of these writers now refuse their assent, credible.

An argument which appears to me of considerable weight arises out of these considerations. Admit, as even the rationalist and mythic interpreters seem to do, though in vague and metaphysical terms, the divine interposition, or at least the pre-arrangement, and effective though remote agency of the Deity, in the introduction of Christianity into the world. These passages in general



are not the vital and essential truths of Christianity, but the vehicle by which these truths were communicated; a kind of language by which opinions were conveyed, and sentiments infused, and the general belief in Christianity implanted, confirmed, and strengthened. As we cannot but suppose that the state of the world, as well during, as subsequent to the introduction of Christianity, the comparative rebarbarisation of the human race, the long centuries in which mankind was governed by imagination, rather than by severe reason, were within the design, or at least the foreknowledge, of all-seeing Providence; so from the fact that this mode of communication with mankind was for so long a period so effective, we may not unreasonably infer its original adoption by Divine Wisdom. This language of poetic incident, and, if I may so speak, of imagery, interwoven as it was with the popular belief, infused into the hymns, the services, the ceremonial of the church, embodied in material representation by painting or sculpture, was the vernacular tongue of Christianity, universally intelligible, and responded to by the human heart, throughout these many centuries. Revelation thus spoke the language, not merely of its own, but of succeeding times; because its design was the perpetuation as well as the first propagation of the Christian religion.

Whether then these were actual appearances or Impressions produced on the mind of those who witnessed them, is of slight importance. In either case they are real historical facts; they partake of poetry in their form, and, in a certain sense, in their groundwork, but they are imaginative, not fictitious; true, as relating that which appeared to the minds of the relators exactly as it did appear (1). Poetry, meaning by poetry such an imaginative form, and not merely the form, but the subject-matter of the narrative, as, for instance, in the first chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke, was the appropriate and perhaps necessary intelligible dialect; the vehicle for the more important truths of the Gospel to later generations. The incidents therefore were so ordered, that they should thus live in the thoughts of men; the revelation itself was so adjusted and arranged in order that it might insure its continued existence throughout this period (2). Could, it may be inquired, a purely, rational or metaphysical creed have survived for any length of time during such stages of human civilisation?

I am aware that this may be considered as carrying out what is called *accommodation* to an unprecedented extent; and that the whole system of what is called accommodation is looked upon with great jealousy. It is supposed to compromise, as it were, the truth of the Deity, or at least of the revelation; a deception, it is said, or at least an illusion, is practised upon the belief of man.

I cannot assent to this view.

From the necessity of the case there must be some departure from the pure and essential spirituality of the Deity, in order to communicate with the human race, — some kind of condescension from the infinite and inconceivable state of Godhead, to become cognisable, or to enter into any kind of relation with material and dimly-mental man. All this is in fact *accommodation*; and the

(1) This, of course, does not apply to facts which must have been either historical events or direct fictions, such as the resurrection of Jesus. The re-appearance of an actual and well known bodily form, cannot be refined into one of those airy and unsubstantial appearances which may be presented to, or may exist solely through, the imaginative faculty. I would strictly maintain this important distinction.

(2) By all those who consider the knowledge of these circumstances to have reached the Evangelists (by whatever notion of inspiration they may be guaranteed) through the ordinary sources of information, from the reminiscences of Ma-

ry herself, or from those of other contemporaries, it would be expected that these remote incidents would be related with the greatest indistinctness, without mutual connection or chronological arrangement, and different incidents be preserved by different Evangelists. This is precisely the case; the very marvellousness of the few circumstances thus preserved accounts in some degree for their preservation, and at the same time for the kind of dimness and poetic character with which they are clothed. They are too slight and wanting in particularity to give the idea of invention: they seem like a few scattered fragments preserved from oral tradition.

adaptation of any appropriate means of addressing, for his benefit, man in any peculiar state of intelligence, is but the wise contrivance, the indispensable condition, which renders that communication either possible, or at least effective to its manifest end. Religion is one great system of accommodation to the wants, to the moral and spiritual advancement, of mankind ; and I cannot but think that as it has so efficaciously adapted itself to one state of the human mind, so it will to that mind during all its progress ; and it is of all things the most remarkable in Christianity, that it has, as it were, its proper mode of addressing with effect every age and every conceivable state of man. Even if (though I conceive it impossible) the imagination should entirely wither from the human soul, and a severer faith enter into an exclusive alliance with pure reason, Christianity would still have its moral perfection, its rational promise of immortality—its approximation to the one pure, spiritual, incomprehensible Deity, to satisfy that reason, and to infuse those sentiments of dependence, of gratitude, of love to God, without which human society must fall to ruin, and the human mind, in humiliating desperation, suspend all its noble activity, and care not to put forth its sublime and eternal energies.

## CHAPTER III.

### COMMENCEMENT OF THE PUBLIC LIFE OF JESUS.

Period to  
the as-  
sumption  
of public  
character.

**NEARLY** thirty years had passed away, since the birth in Bethlehem, during which period there is but one incident recorded, which could direct the public attention to the Son of Mary (1). All religious Jews made their periodical visits to the capital at the three great festivals, especially at the Passover. The more pious women, though exempt by the law from regular attendance, usually accompanied their husbands or kindred. It is probable that, at the age of twelve, the children, who were then said to have assumed the rank of "Sons of the Law," and were considered responsible for their obedience to the civil and religious institutes of the nation, were first permitted to appear with their parents in the metropolis, to be present, and, as it were, to be initiated in the religious ceremonies (2). Accordingly, at this age, Jesus went up with his parents at the festival to Jerusalem (3); but on their return, after the customary residence of seven days, they had advanced a whole day's journey without discovering that the youth was not to be found in the whole caravan, or long train of pilgrims, which probably comprised almost all the religious inhabitants of the populous northern provinces. In the utmost anxiety they returned to Jerusalem, and, after three days (4), found him in one of the chambers, within the precincts of the temple, set apart for public instruction. In these schools, the wisest and most respected of the rabbis, or teachers, were accustomed to hold their sittings, which were open to all who were desirous of knowledge. Jesus was seated, as the scholars usually were; and at his familiarity with the law, and the depth and subtilty of his questions, the learned men were in the utmost astonishment: the phrase may, perhaps, bear the stronger sense—they were "in an ecstasy of admiration." This incident is strictly in accordance with Jewish usage. The more promising youths were encouraged to the early development and display of their acquaintance with the Sacred Writings, and the institutes of the country. Josephus, the historian, relates, that in his early youth, he was an object of wonder for

Visit to  
Jerusalem.

(1) There is no likelihood that the extant apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy contains any traditional truth. This work, in my opinion, was evidently composed with a controversial design, to refute the sects which asserted that Jesus was no more than an ordinary child, and that the divine nature descended upon him at his baptism. Hence his childhood is represented as fertile in miracles as his manhood; miracles which are certainly puerile enough for that age. But it is a curious proof of the vitality of popular legends, that many of these stories are still current, even

in England, in our Christmas carols, and in this form are disseminated among our cottages.

(2) Lightfoot. Wetstein, in loc. "A child was free from presenting himself in the temple at the three feasts, until (according to the school of Hillel) he was able, his father taking him by the hand, to go up with him into the mount of the temple." Lightfoot, x. 71.

(3) Luke, ii. 41. 52.

(4) According to Grotius, they had advanced one day's journey towards Galilee, returned the second, and found him the third: in loc.



his precocious knowledge, with the Wise Men, who took delight in examining and developing his proficiency in the subtler questions of the law. Whether the impression of the transcendent promise of Jesus was as deep and lasting as it was vivid, we have no information; for without reluctance, with no more than a brief and mysterious intimation that public instruction was the business imposed upon him by his Father, he returned with his parents to his remote and undistinguished home. The Law, in this, as in all such cases, harmonising with the eternal instincts of nature, had placed the relation of child and parent on the simplest and soundest principles. The authority of the parent was unlimited, while his power of inflicting punishment on the person, or injuring the fortunes of the child by disinheritance, was controlled; and while the child, on the one hand, was bound to obedience by the strongest sanctions, on the other the duty of maintaining and instructing his offspring was as rigidly enforced upon the father. The youth then returned to the usual subjection to his parents; and, for nearly eighteen years longer, we have no knowledge that Jesus was distinguished among the inhabitants of Nazareth, except by his exemplary piety, and by his engaging demeanour and conduct, which acquired him the general good-will. The law, as some suppose, prescribed the period of thirty years for the assumption of the most important functions; and it was not till he had arrived at this age, that Jesus again emerged from his obscurity (1); nor does it appear improbable that John had previously commenced his public career at the same period in his life.

During these thirty years, most important revolutions had taken place in the public administration of affairs in Judæa; and a deep and sullen change had been slowly working in the popular mind. The stirring events which had rapidly succeeded each other, were such as no doubt might entirely obliterate any transient impressions made by the marvellous circumstances which attended the birth of Jesus, if indeed they had obtained greater publicity than we are inclined to suppose. As the period approach, in which the new Teacher was to publish his mild and benignant faith, the nation, wounded in their pride, galled by oppression, infuriated by the promulgation of fierce and turbulent doctrines more congenial to their temper, became less and less fit to receive any but a warlike and conquering Messiah. The reign of Archelaus, or rather the interregnum, while he awaited the ratification of his kingly powers from Rome, had commenced with a bloody tumult, in which the royal soldiery had attempted to repress the insurrectionary spirit of the populace. The passover had been interrupted— an unpre-

Political  
Revolu-  
tions dur-  
ing the  
preceding  
period.

Reign of  
Archelaus.

(1) Or entering on his thirtieth year. According to the Jewish mode of computation, the year, the week, or the day which had com-  
menced was included in the calculation. Light-foot.

Reduction  
to a Ro-  
man pro-  
vince.

Sanhe-  
drin.

The pub-  
licans.

Insurrec-  
tions.

cedented and ill-omened event! and the nation, assembled from all quarters, had been constrained to disperse without the completion of the sacred ceremony (1). After the tyrannical reign of Archelaus as ethnarch, for more than nine years, he had been banished into Gaul, and Judæa was reduced to a Roman province, under a governor (procurator) of the equestrian order, who was subordinate to the President of Syria. But the first Roman governors, having taken up their residence in Herod's magnificent city on the coast, Cæsarea, the municipal government of Jerusalem had apparently fallen into the hands of the native authorities. The Sanhedrin of seventy-one, composed of the chief priests and men learned in the law, from a court of judicature, to which their functions were chiefly confined, while the executive was administered by the kings, had become a kind of senate. Pontius Pilate, the first of the Roman governors, who, if he did not afflict the capital with the spectacle of a resident foreign ruler, seems to have visited it more frequently, was the first who introduced into the city the "idolatrous" standards of Rome, and had attempted to suspend certain bucklers, bearing an image of the emperor, in the palace of Herod (2). In his time, the Sanhedrin seems to have been recognised as a sort of representative council of the nation. But the proud and unruly people could not disguise from itself the humiliating consciousness, that it was reduced to a state of foreign servitude. Throughout the country the publicans, the farmers or collectors of the tribute to Rome, a burden not less vexatious in its amount (3) and mode of collection, than offensive to their feelings, were openly exercising their office. The chief priest was perpetually displaced at the order of the Roman prefect, by what might be jealous or systematic policy, but which had all the appearance of capricious and insulting violence (4). They looked abroad, but without hope. The country had, without any advantage, suffered all the evils of insurrectionary anarchy. At the period between the death of Herod and the accession of his sons, adventurers of all classes had taken up arms, and some of the lowest, shepherds and slaves, whether hoping to strike in with the popular feeling, and if successful at first, to throw the whole nation on their side, had not scrupled to assume the title and ensigns of royalty. These commotions had been suppressed; but the external appearance of peace was but a fallacious evidence of the real state of public feeling. The religious sects which had long divided the nation, those of the Pharisees and Sadducees, no longer restrained by the strong hand of power, renewed their conflicts: sometimes one party, sometimes the other, ob-

(1) Hist. of the Jews, ii. 132.

(2) Hist. of the Jews, ii. 156.

(3) About this period Syria and Judæa petitioned for a remission of tribute, which was de-

scribed as intolerably oppressive. Tac. Ann. ii. 42.

(4) There were twenty-eight, says Josephus, from the time of Herod to the burning of the temple by Titus. Ant. xx. 8.

tained the high priesthood, and predominated in the Sanhedrin; while from the former had sprung up a new faction, in whose tenets the stern sense of national degradation which rankled in the hearts of so many, found vent and expression.

The sect of Judas the Gaulonite, or as he was called, the Galilean, may be considered the lineal inheritors of that mingled spirit of national independence and of religious enthusiasm, which had in early days won the glorious triumph of freedom from the Syro-Grecian kings, and had maintained a stern though secret resistance to the later Asmoneans, and to the Idumean dynasty. Just before the death of Herod, it had induced the six thousand Pharisees to refuse the oath of allegiance to the king and to his imperial protector, and had probably been the secret incitement in the other acts of resistance to the royal authority. Judas, the Galilean, openly proclaimed the unlawfulness, the impiety of God's people submitting to a foreign yoke, and thus acknowledging the subordination of the Jewish theocracy to the empire of Rome. The payment of tribute which began to be enforced on the deposition of Archelaus, according to his tenets, was not merely a base renunciation of their liberties, but a sin against their God. To the doctrines of this bold and eloquent man, which had been propagated with dangerous rapidity and success, frequent allusions are found in the Gospels. Though the Galileans, slain by Pilate, may not have been of this sect, yet probably the Roman authorities would look with more than usual jealousy on any appearance of tumult arising in the province, which was the reputed birthplace of Judas; and the constant attempts to implicate Jesus with this party appear in their insidious questions about the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar. The subsequent excesses of the Zealots, who were the doctrinal descendants of Judas, and among whom his own sons assumed a dangerous and fatal preeminence, may show that the jealousy of the rulers was not groundless; and indicate, as will hereafter appear, under what unfavourable impressions with the existing authorities, on account of his coming from Galilee, Jesus was about to enter on his public career.

Towards the close of this period of thirty years, though we have no evidence to fix a precise date, while Jesus was growing up in the ordinary course of nature, in the obscurity of the Galilean town of Nazareth, which lay to the north of Jerusalem, at much the same distance to the south John had arrived at maturity, and suddenly appeared as a public teacher, at first in the desert country in the neighbourhood of Hebron; but speedily removed, no doubt for the facility of administering the characteristic rite, from which he was called the Baptist, at all seasons, and with the utmost publicity and effect (1). In the southern desert of Judæa the streams are few and

Judas the  
Galilean.

John the  
Baptist.

(1) Matt. iii. 1—12. Mark, i. 2—8. Luke, iii. 1—18.



scantly, probably in the summer entirely dried up. The nearest large body of water was the Dead Sea. Besides that the western banks of this great lake are mostly rugged and precipitous, natural feeling, and still more the religious awe of the people, would have shrunk from performing sacred ablutions in those fetid, unwholesome, and accursed waters (1). But the banks of the great national stream, the scene of so many miracles, offered many situations, in every respect admirably calculated for this purpose. The Baptist's usual station was near the place, Bethabara, the ford of the Jordan, which tradition pointed out as that where the waters divided before the ark, that the chosen people might enter into the promised land. Here, though the adjacent region towards Jerusalem is wild and desert, the immediate shores of the river offer spots of great picturesque beauty. The Jordan has a kind of double channel. In its summer course, the shelving banks, to the top of which the waters reach at its period of flood, are covered with acacias and other trees of great luxuriance; and amid the rich vegetation and grateful shade afforded by these scenes, the Italian painters, with no less truth than effect, have delighted to represent the Baptist surrounded by listening multitudes, or performing the solemn rite of initiation. The teacher himself partook of the ascetic character of the more solitary of the Essenes, all of whom retired from the tumult and license of the city, some dwelt alone in remote hermitages, and not rarely pretended to a prophetic character. His raiment was of the coarsest texture, of camel's hair; his girdle (an ornament often of the greatest richness in Oriental costume, of the finest linen or cotton, and embroidered with silver or gold,) was of untanned leather; his food the locusts (2), and wild honey, of which there is a copious supply both in the open and the wooded regions, in which he had taken up his abode.

Baptism.

No question has been more strenuously debated than the origin of the rite of baptism. The practice of the external washing of the body, as emblematic of the inward purification of the soul, is almost universal. The sacred Ganges cleanses all moral pollution from the Indian; among the Greeks and Romans even the murderer might, it was supposed, wash the blood "clean from his hands (3);" and in many of their religious rites, lustrations or oblations, either in the running stream or in the sea, purified the candidate for divine favour, and made him fit to approach the shrines of the gods. The perpetual similitude and connection between the uncleanness of the body and of the soul, which ran through the

(1) The Aulon, or Valley of the Jordan, is mostly desert. Διατέμνει τὴν Γεννῆσάρ μέσσην, ἔπειτα πολλὴν ἀναμετρούμενος ἐρημίαν εἰς τὴν Ἀσφαλτίτιν ἐξείσι λίμνην. Joseph. B. T. iii. 10. 7.

(2) That locusts are no uncommon food is so

well known from all travellers in the East, that it is unnecessary to quote any single authority. There is a kind of bean, called in that country the locust bean, which some have endeavoured to make out to have been the food of John.

(3) Ah nimum facies, qui tristia crimina credis  
Tolli illumina posse putatis aqua. OVID.

Mosaic law, and had become completely interwoven with the common language and sentiment, the formal enactment of ablutions in many cases, which either required the cleansing of some unhealthy taint, or more than usual purity, must have familiarised the mind with the mysterious effects attributed to such a rite : and of all the Jewish sects, that of the Essenes, to which no doubt popular opinion associated the Baptist, were most frequent and scrupulous in their ceremonial ablutions. It is strongly asserted on the one hand, and denied with equal confidence on the other, that baptism was in general use among the Jews as a distinct and formal rite ; and that it was by this ceremony that the Gentile proselytes, who were not yet thought worthy of circumcision, or perhaps refused to submit to it, were imperfectly initiated into the family of Israel (1). Though there does not seem very conclusive evidence in the earlier rabbinical writings to the antiquity, yet there are perpetual allusions to the existence of this rite, at least at a later period ; and the argument, that after irreconcilable hostility had been declared between the two religions, the Jews would be little likely to borrow their distinctive ceremony from the Christians, applies with more than ordinary force. Nor, if we may fairly judge from the very rapid and concise narrative of the Evangelists, does the public administration of baptism by John appear to have excited astonishment as a new and unprecedented rite.

For, from every quarter, all ranks and sects crowded to the teaching and to partake in the mystic ablutions performed by the Baptist. The stream of the Jordan reflected the wondering multitudes of every class and character, which thronged around him with that deep interest and high-wrought curiosity, which could not fail to be excited, especially at such a crisis, by one who assumed the tone and authority of a divine commission, and seemed, even if he were not hereafter to break forth in a higher character, to renew in his person the long silent and interrupted race of the ancient prophets. Of all those prophets Elijah was held in the most profound reverence by the descendants of Israel (2). He was the representative of their great race of moral instructors and interpreters of the Divine Will, whose writings (though of Elijah nothing remained) had been admitted to almost equal authority with the law itself, were

Multitudes  
who attend  
his preach-  
ing.

(1) Lightfoot, *Harmony of Evang.* iii. 38. iv. 407, etc. Danzius, in *Meuschen, Talmudica*, etc. Schoetgen and Weinstein, in loc.

(2) Some of the strange notions about Elias may be found in Lightfoot, *Harmon.* of *Evang.* iv. 399. Compare *Ecclesiast.* xlviii. 10, 11. "Elias, who is written of for reproofs in these times, to appease the anger of him that is ready for wrath (or before wrath, *προθύμου*, or *πρὸ θυμού*), to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob. Blessed are they that see thee, and are adorned with love ; for we too shall live the life." In the English translation the traditionary allusion is obscured. "In that day,

when the Lord shall deliver Israel, three days before the coming of the Messiah, Elias shall come, and shall stand on the mountains of Israel mourning and wailing concerning them, and saying, How long will ye stay in the dry and wasted land? And his voice shall be heard from one end of the world to the other; and after that he shall say unto them, "Peace cometh to the world, as it is written (Isaiah, lii. 7.), How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." Jalkut Schanuni, fol. 53. c. 6. Quoted in Bertholdi. See other quotations. Schoetgen, *Hor. Heb.* ii. 533, 534. Justin, *Dial. cum Tryph.*

read in the public synagogues, and with the other sacred books formed the canon of their Scripture. A mysterious intimation had closed this hallowed volume of the prophetic writings, announcing, as from the lips of Malachi, on which the fire of prophecy expired, a second coming of Elijah, which it should seem popular belief had construed into the personal re-appearance of him who had ascended into heaven in a car of fire. And where, and at what time, and in what form was he so likely to appear, as in the desert, by the shore of the Jordan, at so fearful a crisis in the national destinies, and in the wild garb and with the mortified demeanour so frequent among the ancient seers? The language of the Baptist took the bold, severe, and uncompromising tone of those delegates of the Most High. On both the great religious factions he denounced the same maledictions, from both demanded the same complete and immediate reformation. On the people he inculcated mutual charity; on the publicans, whom he did not exclude from his followers, justice; on the soldiery (1) humanity, and abstinence from all unnecessary violence and pillage. These general denunciations against the vices of the age, and the indiscriminate enforcement of a higher moral and religious standard, though they might gall the consciences of individuals, or wound the pride of the different sects; yet, as clashing with no national prejudice, would excite no hostility, which could be openly avowed; while the fearless and impartial language of condemnation was certain to secure the wonder, the respect, the veneration, of the populace.

Expecta-  
tion of the  
Messiah.

But that which no doubt drew the whole population in such crowds to the desert shores of the Jordan, was the mysterious yet distinct assertion, that the “kingdom of Heaven was at hand (2)” —that kingdom of which the belief was as universal as of the personal coming of the Messiah; and as variously coloured by the disposition and temperament of every class and individual, as the character of the sovereign, who was thus to assume dominion. All anticipated the establishment of an earthly sovereignty, but its approach thrilled the popular bosom with mingled emotions. The very prophecy which announced the previous appearance of Elijah, spoke of the “great and dreadful day of the Lord,” and, as has been said, according to the current belief, fearful calamities were to precede the glorious days of the Messiah: nor was it till after a dark

(1) Michaelis has very ingeniously observed, that these men are described not merely as soldiers (*στρατιῶται*), but as on actual service (*στρατευόμενοι*); and has conjectured that they were part of the forces of Herod Antipas, who was at this time at war, or preparing for war, with Aretas, king of Arabia. Their line of march would lead them to the ford of the Jordan.

(2) This phrase is discussed by Kuinoel, vol. i. page 73. According to its Jewish meaning, it

was equivalent to the kingdom of the Messiah (the kingdom of God, or of Heaven), Schoetgen, Hor. Hebr. p. 1147., which was to commence and endure for ever, when the law was to be fully restored, and the immutable theocracy of God's chosen people re-established for eternity. In its higher Christian sense it assumed the sense of the moral dominion to be exercised by Christ over his subjects in this life; that dominion which is to be continued over his faithful in the state of immortal existence beyond the grave.



period of trial, that the children of Abraham, as the prerogative of their birth, the sons of God (1), the inheritors of his kingdom, were to emerge from their obscurity; their theocracy to be re-established in its new and more enduring form; the dead, at least those who were to share in the first resurrection, their own ancestors, were to rise; the solemn judgment was to be held; the hostile nations were to be thrust down to hell; and those only of the Gentiles, who should become proselytes to Judaism, were to be admitted to this earthly paradisiacal state (2).

The language of the Baptist at once fell in with and opposed the popular feeling; at one instant it raised, at the next it crossed their hopes. He announced the necessity of a complete moral change, while he repudiated the claims of those who rested their sole title to the favours of God on their descent from the chosen race, for "God even of the stones could raise up children to Abraham." But, on the other hand, he proclaimed the immediate, the instant coming of the Messiah; and on the nature of the kingdom, though he might deviate from the ordinary language, in expressly intimating that the final separation would be made not on national but moral grounds—that the bad and good, even of the race of Israel, were to be doomed according to their wickedness or virtue—yet there was nothing which interfered with the prevailing belief in the personal temporal reign of the Son of David.

The course of our history will show how slowly Christianity attained the purely moral and spiritual notion of the change to be wrought by the coming of Christ, and how perpetually this invertebrate Judaism has revived in the Christian Church, where, in days of excitement, the old Jewish tenet of the personal reign of the

Mysterious  
language  
of the Bap-  
tist.

(1) Compare Justin Martyr, Dial. 433. ed. Thirlby. Grotius on Matt. x. 28. xiv. 2. James, ii. 14. Whitby on Acts, i. 23. Jortin's Discourses, page 26.

(2) See Wetstein, in loc. The following passage closely resembles the language of John: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt. iii. 12. The Jer. Talmud adduces Isaiah, xvi. 12. "The morning cometh and also the night; it shall be morning to Israel, but night to the nations of the world." (Taanith, fol. 64. 1.) "The threshing is come: the straw they cast into the fire, the chaff unto the wind, but preserve the wheat in the floor, and every one that sees it, takes it and kisses it. So the nations of the world say, The world was made for our sakes: but Israel say to them, Is it not written, But the people shall be as the burning of the lime-kiln, but Israel in the time to come (i. e. the time of the Messiah) shall be left only; as it is said, The Lord shall be with him alone, and there shall be no strange God." Mid. Tell, on Psalm ii. Lightfoot, iii. 47.

Some of these and similar expressions may belong to the period of the obstinate, we may surely add, the patriotic struggle of the Jews against the tyranny of Rome, after what Tacitus terms

their "hatred of the human race," had been embittered by years of contempt and persecution; and while, in Gibbon's language, "their dreams of prophecy and conquest" were kept alive by the bold resistance to Titus, and the successes of Bar-cochab under Hadrian. But there can be little doubt, that pride had already drawn these distinctions between themselves and the rest of mankind, which were deepened by the sense of persecution, and cherished as the only consolation of degradation and despair.

Le Judaïsme est un système de misanthropie, qui en veut à tous les peuples de la terre sans aucune exception.\*\*\* Il n'étend l'amour du prochain qu'aux seuls Juifs, tandis que la Mosaïsme l'étend à tous les hommes, sans aucune distinction (vide note). Il commande en outre qu'on envisage tous les autres peuples de la terre, comme dignes de haine et de mépris, pour la seule raison qu'ils n'ont pas été, ou qu'ils ne sont pas Juifs. Chai-rini, Preface to Translation of Talmud, p. 55.

Passages of the Talmud will certainly bear out this harsh conclusion; but I think better of human nature, than to suppose that this sentiment was not constantly counteracted by the humane feelings to which affliction would subdue hearts of better mould, or which would be infused by the gentler spirit of the genuine religion of Moses.

Messiah has filled the mind of the enthusiast. Nor were the Jews likely to be more embarrassed than mankind in general by the demand of high moral qualifications; for while one part would look on their own state with perfect complacency and satisfaction, another would expect to obtain from Heaven, without much effort or exertion on their own part, that which Heaven required. God who intended to make them happy would first make them virtuous.

Deputation of the priesthood concerning the pretensions of John.

Such was the general excitement at the appearance, the teaching, and the baptizing of John. So great was the influence which he had obtained throughout the country, that, as we shall speedily see, a formal deputation from the national authorities was commissioned to inquire into his pretensions, and to ascertain whether he limited himself to those of a prophet, or laid claim to the higher title of "the Christ." And the deep hold which he had taken upon the popular feeling is strongly indicated by the fact, that the rulers did not dare, on the occasion of a question proposed to them at a much later period, by Jesus, openly to deny the prophetic mission of John, which was not merely generally acknowledged, but even zealously asserted by the people.

How long the preaching of John had lasted before the descent of the Son of Mary to the shores of the Jordan, rests on somewhat uncertain evidence (1). We can decide with as little confidence on some other more interesting questions. There is no precise information, whether any or what degree of intercourse had been kept up between the family of Zachariah and that of Joseph, who resided at a considerable distance from each other, and were not likely to meet, unless at the periodical feasts; nor how far John might be previously acquainted with the person of Jesus (2). But it is undoubtedly a remarkable fact in the history of Christianity, that from the very first appearance of Jesus on the shores of the Jordan, unquestionably before he had displayed his powers, or openly asserted his title to the higher place, John should invariably retain his humbler relative position. Such was his uniform language from the commencement of his career; such it continued to the end. Yet at this period the power and influence of John over the public mind were at their height; Jesus, humanly speaking, was but an unknown and undistinguished youth, whose qualifications to maintain the higher character were as yet untried. John, however, cedes at once the

Avowed inferiority of John to Jesus.

(1) Matt. iii. 13—17. Mark, i. 9. 11. Luke, iii. 21. 23. John, i. 15. 18.

(2) The discrepancies between the different evangelists as to the language of John, on several occasions, with regard to Jesus, appear to me characteristic of the dim and awe-struck state of the general mind, which would extend to the remembrance and the faithful record of such incidents. It is assumed, I think without warrant, that John himself must have had a distinct or definite notion of the Messiahship of Jesus: he may have applied some of the prophetic or po-

pular sayings supposed to have reference to the Messiah, without any precise notion of their meaning; and his conception of the Messiah's character, and of Jesus himself, may have varied during different passages of his own life. If the whole had been more distinct and systematic, it would be more liable, according to my judgment, to suspicion. The account of John in Josephus is just as his character would be likely to appear to a writer in his character and situation.

first place : in the strongest language (1) he declares himself immeasurably inferior to him, who stood among the crowd, unmarked and unregarded ; whatever his own claims, whatever the effects of his initiatory rite, Jesus was at once to assume a higher function, to administer a more powerful and influential baptism (2). This has always appeared to me one of the most striking incidental arguments for the truth of the Evangelic narrative, and consequently of the Christian faith. The recognition appears to have been instant and immediate. Hitherto, the Baptist had insisted on the purification of all who had assembled around him ; and, with the commanding dignity of a Heaven-commissioned teacher, had rebuked, without distinction, the sins of all classes and all sects. In Jesus alone, by his refusal to baptize him, he acknowledges the immaculate purity, while his deference assumes the tone of homage, almost of adoration (3).

Jesus, however, perhaps to do honour to a rite, which was here-  
after to be that of initiation into the new religion, insists on sub-  
mitting to the usual ablution. As he went up out of the water, which  
wound below in its deep channel, and was ascending the shelving  
shore, a light shone around with the rapid and undulating motion  
of a dove, typifying the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Son of  
Man ; and a voice was heard from Heaven, which recognised him  
as the Son of God, well pleasing to the Almighty Father of the Uni-  
verse. This light could scarcely have been seen, or the voice heard,  
by more than the Baptist and the Son of Mary himself (4), as no  
immediate sensation appears to have been excited among the mul-  
titudes, such as must have followed this public and miraculous pro-  
clamation of his sacred character ; and at a subsequent period, Jesus  
seems to have appeared among the followers of John, unrecognised,  
or at least unhonoured, until he was pointed out by the Baptist, and  
announced as having been proclaimed from Heaven at his baptism.  
The calmness and comparatively unimposing peacefulness of this

Baptism of  
Jesus.

(1) The remarkable expression, "whosoever's latchet I am not able to unloose," is illustrated by a passage in the Talmud. (Tract. Kidduschin, xxii. 2.) "Every office a servant will do for his master, a scholar should perform for his teacher, excepting loosening his sandal thong."

(2) Strauss (i. 396.) argues that this concession of the higher place by the ascetic John (and asceticism, he justly observes, is the most stern and unyielding principle in the human character is so contrary to the principles of human nature, and to all historical precedent, that the whole must be fictitious ; a singular canon, that every thing extraordinary and unprecedented in history must be untrue. I suspect the common phrase, "truth is strange—stranger than fiction," to be founded on deeper knowledge of human nature, and of the events of the world.

(3) The more distinct declarations of inferiority contained in several passages are supposed by most harmonists of the Gospels to have been made after the baptism of Jesus.

(4) This appears from John, i. 32. Neander (Leben Jesu, p. 69.) represents it as a symbolic vision.

It may be well to observe, that this explanation of voices from heaven, as a mental perception, not as real articulate sounds but as inward impressions, is by no means modern, or what passes under the unpopular name of rationalism. There is a very full and remarkable passage in Origen cont. Celsum, i. 48., on this point. He is speaking of the offence which may be given to the simple, who from their great simplicity are ready on every occasion to shake the world, and cleave the compact firmament of heaven. *Κάν προσ-  
κόπη τὸ τοιοῦτον τοῖς ἀπλουτέροις,  
οἱ διὰ πολλὴν ἀπλότητα κινεῖσι τὸν  
κόσμον, σχίζοντες τὸ τηλικούτον σῆμα  
ἠνώμενον τοῦ πάντος οὐρανοῦ.* See like-  
wise in Suicer's Thesaur. voc. Φάνη, the pas-  
sages from St. Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.



scene, which may be described as the inauguration of this "greater than Moses," in his office as founder of a new religion, is strikingly contrasted with the terrific tempests and convulsions of nature, at the delivery of the law on Sinai, and harmonises with the general tone and character of the new faith. The image of the Dove, the universal symbol of innocence and peace (1), even if purely illustrative, is beautifully in keeping with the gentler character of the whole transaction.

Temptation of Jesus.

The Temptation of Jesus is the next event in the history of his life (2); and here, at the opening, as it were, of his career, appears shadowed out the sort of complex character under which Christianity represents its Divine Author, as a kind of federal representative of mankind. On the interpretation of no incident in the Gospels, do those who insist on the literal acceptance of the Evangelists' language, and those who consider that, even in the New Testament much allowance is to be made for the essentially allegoric character of Oriental narrative, depart so far asunder (3). While the former receive the whole as a real scene, the latter suppose that the truth lies deeper; and that some, not less real, though less preternatural transaction, is related, either from some secret motive, or, according to the genius of Eastern narrative, in this figurative style. As pretending to discover historical facts of much importance in the life of Christ, the latter exposition demands our examination. The Temptation, according to one view, is a parabolic description of an actual event (4); according to another, of a kind of inward mental trial, which continued during the public career of Jesus. In the first theory, the Tempter was nothing less than the high priest, or one of the Sanhedrin, delegated by their authority to discover the real pretensions of Jesus. Having received intelligence of the testimony borne to Jesus by John, this person was directed to follow him into the wilderness, where he first demanded, as the price of his acknowledgment by the public authorities, some display of miraculous power, such as should enable him, like Moses, to support the life of man by a preternatural supply of food in the wilderness. He then held out to him the splendid prospects of aggrandisement, if he should boldly place himself, as a divinely commissioned leader, at the head of the nation; and even led him in person to the pinnacle of the temple, and commanded him to cast himself down, as

(1) Ennius apud Cic. de Div. i. 48. Tibull. i. 8, 9.

(2) Matt. iv. 1. 11. Mark, iv. 12, 13. Luke, iv. 1—13.

(3) Some of the older writers, as Theodore of Mopsuestia, explained it as a vision: to this notion Le Clerc inclines. Schleiermacher treats it as a parable, p. 58. Those who are most scrupulous in departing from the literal sense, cannot but be embarrassed with this kind of personal conflict with a Being whom the devil must have

known, according to their own view, to have been divine. This is one of those points which will be differently understood, according to the turn and cast of mind of different individuals. I would therefore deprecate the making either interpretation an article of faith, or deciding with dogmatic certainty on so perplexing a passage.

(4) This theory, differently modified, is embraced by Herman Vonder Hartd, by the elder Rosenmüller (Schol. in loc.), and by Kuinoel.

the condition, if he should be miraculously preserved, of his formal recognition by the Sanhedrin. To this view, ingenious as it is, some obvious objections occur;—the precise date apparently assigned to the transaction by the Evangelists, and the improbability that, at so early a period, he would be thought of so much importance by the ruling powers; the difficulty of supposing that, even if there might be prudential motives to induce St. Matthew, writing in Judæa, to disguise, under this allegoric veil, so remarkable an event in the history of Christ, St. Luke, influenced by no such motives, would adopt the same course. Though, indeed, it may be replied, that if the transaction had once assumed, it would be likely to retain, its parabolic dress; still, it must seem extraordinary that no clearer notice of so extraordinary a circumstance should transpire in any of the Christian records. Nor does it appear easily reconcilable with the cautious distance at which the authorities appear to have watched the conduct of Jesus, thus, as it were, at once to have committed themselves, and almost placed themselves within his power.

The second theory is embarrassed with fewer of these difficulties, though it is liable to the same objection, as to the precise date apparently assigned to the incident. According to this view, at one particular period of his life, or at several times, the earthly and temporal thoughts, thus parabolically described as a personal contest with the Principle of Evil, passed through the mind of Jesus, and arrayed before him the image constantly present to the minds of his countrymen, that of the author of a new temporal theocracy. For so completely were the suggestions in unison with the popular expectation, that ambition, if it had taken a human or a worldly turn, might have urged precisely such displays of supernatural power as are represented in the temptations of Jesus. On no two points, probably, would the Jews have so entirely coincided, as in expecting the Messiah to assume his title and dignity, before the view of the whole people, and in the most public and imposing manner; such for instance, as, springing from the highest point of the temple, to have appeared floating in the air, or preternaturally poised upon the unyielding element; any miraculous act, in short, of a totally opposite character to those more private, more humane, and, if we may so speak, more unassuming signs, to which he himself appealed as the evidences of his mission. To be the lord of all the kingdoms, at least of Palestine, if not of the whole world, was according to the same popular belief, the admitted right of the Messiah. If then, as the history implies, the Saviour was tried by the intrusion of worldly thoughts, whether according to the common literal interpretation, actually urged by the Principle of Evil, in his proper person, or, according to this more modified interpretation of the passage, suggested to his mind, such was the natural turn which they might have taken.

But, however interpreted, the moral purport of the scene remains the same—the intimation that the strongest and most lively impressions were made upon the mind of Jesus, to withdraw him from the purely religious end of his being upon earth, to transform him from the author of a moral revolution to be slowly wrought by the introduction of new principles of virtue, and new rules for individual and social happiness, to the vulgar station of one of the great monarchs or conquerors of mankind; to degrade him from a being who was to offer to man the gift of eternal life, and elevate his nature to a previous fitness for that exalted destiny, to one whose influence over his own generation might have been more instantaneously manifest, but which could have been as little permanently beneficial as that of any other of those remarkable names, which, especially in the East, have blazed for a time and expired.

From the desert, not improbably supposed to be that of Quarantania, lying between Jericho and Jerusalem, where tradition, in Palestine unfortunately of no great authority, still points out the scene of this great spiritual conflict, and where a mountain (1), commanding an almost boundless prospect of the valleys and hills of Judæa, is shown as that from whence Jesus looked down unmoved on the kingdoms of the earth, the Son of Man returned to the scene of John's baptism.

Deputation from Jerusalem to John.

In the mean time the success of the new prophet, the Baptist, had excited the attention, if not the jealousy, of the ruling authorities of the Jews. The solemn deputation appeared to inquire into his pretensions. The Pharisees probably at this time predominated in the great council, and the delegates, as of this sect, framed their questions in accordance with the popular traditions, as well as with the prophetic writings (2): they inquire whether he is the Christ, or Elias, or *the prophet* (3). John at once disclaims his title to the appellation of the Christ; nor is he Elijah, personally returned, according to the vulgar expectation (4); nor Jeremiah, to whom tradition assigned the name of "the prophet," who was to rise from the dead at the coming of the Messiah, in order, it was supposed, to restore the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense, which he was said to have concealed in a cave on the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and which were to be brought again to light at the Messiah's coming (5).

The next day John renewed his declaration that he was the harbinger (6), described in the prophet Isaiah, who, according to the custom in the progresses of Oriental monarchs, was to go before,

(1) The best description of this mountain is in the Travels of the Abbé Mariti.

(2) The Sanhedrin alone could judge a tribe, the high priest, or a prophet. (Sanhedrin Paroch. i.) Hence "a prophet could not perish

out of Jerusalem." Luke, xiii. 33. Lightfoot, Harm. Ev.

(3) John, i. 19—28.

(4) Weist. Nov. Test. in loc.

(5) 2 Macc. ii. 4—8. xv. 14.

(6) John, i. 29. 34.



and cutting through mountains and bridging valleys, to make a wide and level way for the advance of the Great King. So John was to remove some of the moral impediments for the reception of Christ. At the same time, as Jesus mingled undistinguished among the crowd, without directly designating him, he declared the actual presence of the mightier teacher who was about to appear. The next day, in the more private circle of his believers, John did not scruple to point out more distinctly the person of the Messiah (1). The occasion of his remarkable speech (it has been suggested with much probability) was the passing of large flocks of sheep and lambs, which, from the rich pastoral districts beyond the river, crossed the Jordan at the ford, and were driven on to the metropolis, to furnish either the usual daily sacrifices or those for the approaching passover. The Baptist, as they were passing, glanced from them to Jesus, declared him to be that superior Being, of whom he was but the humble harbinger, and described him as "the Lamb of God (2), which taketh away the sins of the world." Unblemished and innocent as the meek animals that passed, like them he was to go up as a sacrifice to Jerusalem, and in some mysterious manner to "take away" the sins of mankind. Another title, by which he designated Jesus yet more distinctly as the Messiah, was that of the "Son of God," one of the appellations of the Deliverer most universally admitted, though, no doubt, it might bear a different sense to different hearers.

Jesus designated by John as the Messiah.

Among the more immediate disciples of John this declaration of their master could not but excite the strongest emotions; nor can anything be more characteristic of the feelings of that class among the Jews than the anxious rapidity with which the wonderful intelligence is propagated, and the distant and awe-struck reverence with which the disciples slowly present themselves to their new master. The first of these were, Andrew, the brother of Simon (Peter), and probably the author of the narrative, St. John (3). Simon, to whom his brother communicates the extraordinary

First disciples of Jesus.

(1) John, i. 35, 36.

(2) Supposing (as is the general opinion) that this term refers to the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, according to the analogy between the death of Jesus and the sacrificial victims, subsequently developed by the apostles (and certainly the narrower sense maintained by Grotius, and the modern learned writers (see Rosenmüller and Kuinoel in loc.) are by no means satisfactory), to the hearers of John at this time such an allusion must have been as unintelligible as the intimations of Jesus about his future sufferings to his disciples. Indeed, if understood by John himself in its full sense, it is difficult to reconcile it with the more imperfect views of the Messiah, evinced by his doubt during his imprisonment. To the Jews in general it can have conveyed no distinct meaning. That the Messiah was to be blameless, was strictly accordant with their notions, and "his taking away sins," bore an intelligible Jewish sense; but taking them away by

his own sacrifice, was a purely Christian tenet, and but obscurely and prophetically alluded to before the death of Christ. How far the Jews had any notion of a suffering Messiah (afterwards their great stumbling-block) is a most obscure question. The Chaldaic paraphrast certainly refers, but in very vague and contradictory language (Isaiah, lii, 13. et seq.), to the Messiah. See on one side Schoetgen, Hor. Heb. ii. 181. and Danzius, de Δύτρω, in Meuschen; on the other, Rosenmüller and Gesenius on Isaiah. The notion of the double Messiah, the suffering Messiah the son of Joseph, and the triumphant, the son of David (as in Pearson on the Creed, vol. ii.), is of most uncertain date and origin; but nothing, in my opinion, can be more incredible than that it should have been derived, as Bertholdt would imagine, from the Samaritan belief. Bertholdt, c. 29.

(3) John, i. 37—42.

tidings, immediately follows, and on him Jesus bestows a new name, expressive of the firmness of his character. All these belonged to the same village, Bethsaida, on the shore of the lake of Gennesareth. On the departure of Jesus, when he is returning to Galilee, he summons another, named Philip. Philip, like Andrew, hastens away to impart the tidings to Nathanael, not improbably conjectured to be the apostle Bartholomew (the son of Tolmai or Ptolemy), a man of blameless character, whose only doubt is, that the Messiah should come from a town of such proverbial disrepute as Nazareth (1). But the doubts of Nathanael are removed by the preternatural knowledge displayed by Jesus of an incident which he could not have witnessed; and this fifth disciple, in like manner, does homage to the Messiah, under his titles "the Son of God, the King of Israel." Yet this proof of more than human knowledge, Jesus declares to be as nothing in comparison with the more striking signs of the Divine protection and favour, which he asserts, under the popular and significant image of the perpetual intervention of angels, that his chosen followers are hereafter to witness.

Jesus commenced his career : disciples had attached themselves to this new master, and his claim to a divine mission must necessarily be accompanied by the signs and wonders which were to ratify the appearance of the Messiah. Yet even his miraculous powers had nothing of the imposing, the appalling, or public character, looked for, no doubt, by those who expected that the appeal would be made to their senses and their passions, to their terror and their hope, not to the more tranquil emotions of gratitude and love. But of this more hereafter.

The first miracle of Jesus was the changing the water into wine, at the marriage feast at Cana, in Galilee (2). This event, however, was not merely remarkable as being the first occasion for the display of supernatural power, but as developing in some degree the primary principles of the new religious revelation. The attendance of Jesus at a marriage festival, his contributing to the festive hilarity, more particularly his sanctioning the use of wine on such occasions, at once separated and set him apart from that sect with which he was most likely to be confounded. John, no doubt, passed with the vulgar for a stricter Essene, many of whom, it has been before said, observed the severest morality, and, in one great point, differed most widely from all their brethren. They disregarded the ceremonies of the law, even the solemn national festivals, and depreciated sacrifices. Shut up, in short, in their own monastic establishments, they had substituted observances of their own for those of the Mosaic institutes. In all these points, John, who no where

(1) John, i. 43 - 51.

(2) John, ii. 1-11.

appears to have visited Jerusalem, at least after his assumption of the prophetic office (for his presence there would doubtless have excited much commotion), followed the Essenian practice. Like them he was severe, secluded, monastic, or rather eremitical in his habits and language. But among the most marked peculiarities of the Essenian fraternity was their aversion to marriage. Though some of the less rigid of their communities submitted to this inevitable evil, yet those who were of higher pretensions, and doubtless of higher estimation, maintained inviolable celibacy, and had fully imbibed that Oriental principle of asceticism, which proscribed all indulgence of the gross and material body, as interfering with the purity of the immaculate spirit. The perfect religious being was he who had receded to the utmost from all human passion; who had withdrawn his senses from all intercourse with the material world, or rather had estranged his mind from all objects of sense, and had become absorbed in the silent and ecstatic contemplation of the Deity (1). This mysticism was the vital principle of the Essenian observances in Judæa, and of those of the Therapeutæ, or Contemplatists, in Egypt, the lineal ancestors of the Christian monks and hermits. By giving public countenance to a marriage ceremony, still more by sanctioning the use of wine on such occasions (for wine was likewise proscribed by Essenian usage), Jesus thus, at the outset of his career, as he afterwards placed himself in direct opposition to the other prevailing sects, so he had already receded from the practice of these recluse mystics, who formed the third, and though not in numbers, yet in character and influence, by no means unimportant religious party.

After this event in Cana (2), Jesus, with his mother, his brethren, and some of his disciples, took up their abode, not in their native town of Nazareth, but in the village of Capernaum (3), which was situated not far from the rising city of Tiberias, on the shore of the beautiful lake, the sea of Gennesareth. It was called the Village of Comfort, or the Lovely Village, from a spring of delicious water, and became afterwards the chief residence of Jesus, and the great scene of his wonderful works (4).

Capernaum.

• (1) It may be worth observing (for the connection of Jesus with the Essenes has been rather a favourite theory) that his illustrations so perpetually drawn from the marriage rite, and from the vineyard, would be in direct opposition to Essenian phraseology. All these passages were peculiarly embarrassing to the Gnostic ascetics. "Noiuit Marcion sub imagine Domini a nuptiis redeuntis Christum cogitari" "detestatorem nuptiarum," he rejected from his Gospel, Luke, xiv. 7—11. See the Gospel of Marcion by Hahn in Thilo. Cod. Apoc. Nov. Testam. p. 444. and 449.

(2) Maundrell places Cana north-west of Nazareth; it was about a day's journey from Capernaum. Josephus (De Vita Sua) marched all night from Cana, and arrived at Tiberias in the morning.

(3) John, ii. 12.

(4) Among the remarkable and distinctive peculiarities of the Gospel of St. John, is the much greater length at which he relates the events which occurred during the earlier visits of Jesus to Jerusalem, about which the other Evangelists are either entirely silent or extremely brief. I cannot help suspecting a very natural reason for this fact, that John was the constant companion of his Master during these journeys, and that the other apostles were much less regular in their attendance upon him during these more distant excursions, especially at the earlier period. The Gospel of St. John (some few passages omitted) might be described as the acts of Jesus in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood.



First pass-  
over, A. D.  
27.

The Passover approached (1), the great festival (2) which assembled not only from all parts of Palestine, but even from remoter regions, the more devout Jews, who at this period of the year constantly made their pilgrimage to the Holy City : regular caravans came from Babylonia and Egypt ; and no doubt, as we shall explain hereafter, considerable numbers from Syria, Asia Minor, and the other provinces of the Roman empire. There can be no doubt that at least vague rumours of the extraordinary transactions which had already excited public attention towards Jesus of Nazareth, must have preceded his arrival at Jerusalem. The declaration of the Baptist, however neither himself nor many of his immediate disciples might attend the feast, could not but have transpired. Though the single miracle wrought at Cana might not have been distinctly reported at Jerusalem—though the few disciples who may have followed him from Galilee, having there disseminated the intelligence of his conduct and actions, might have been lost in the multitude and confusion of the crowded city—though, on the other hand, the impressions thus made, would be still further counter-balanced by the general prejudice against Galilee, more especially against a Galilean from Nazareth—still the son of Mary, even at his first appearance in Jerusalem, seems to have been looked on with a kind of reverential awe. His actions were watched, and though both the ruling powers, and, as yet apparently, the leading Pharisees kept aloof, though he is neither molested by the jealousy of the latter, nor excites the alarm of the former, yet the mass of the people already observed his words and his demeanour with anxious interest. The conduct of Jesus tended to keep up this mysterious uncertainty so likely to work on the imagination of a people thus ripe for religious excitement. He is said to have performed “ many miracles,” but these, no doubt, were still of a private, secret, and unimposing character ; and on all other points he maintains the utmost reserve, and avoids with the most jealous precaution any action or language which might directly commit him with the rulers or the people.

Jesus at  
Jerusalem

The Tem-  
ple a mart.

One act alone was public, commanding, and authoritative. The outer court of the Temple had become, particularly at the period of the greatest solemnity, a scene of profane disorder and confusion. As the Jews assembled from all quarters of the country, almost of the world, they were under the necessity of purchasing the victims for their offerings on the spot ; and the rich man who could afford a sheep or an ox, or the poor who was content with the humbler oblation of a pair of doves, found the dealer at hand to supply his wants. The traders in sheep, cattle, and pigeons, had therefore been permitted to establish themselves within the pre-

(1) John, ii. 13.

(2) Many writers suppose that about half a year passed between the baptism of Jesus and

this passover. This is possible ; but it appears to me that there is no evidence whatever as to the length of the period.

cinets of the Temple in the court of the Gentiles (1); and a line of shops (tabernæ) ran along the outer wall of the inner court. Every Jew made an annual payment of a half-shekel to the Temple; and as the treasury, according to ancient usage, only received the coin of Palestine (2), those who came from distant provinces were obliged to change their foreign money, the relative value of which was probably liable to considerable fluctuation. It is evident from the strong language of Jesus, that not only a fair and honest, but even a questionable and extortionate traffic was conducted within the holy precincts. Nor is it impossible, that even in the Temple courts trade might be carried on less connected with the religious character of the place. Throughout the East, the periodical assemblages of the different tribes of the same descent at some central temple, is intimately connected with commercial views (3). The neighbourhood of the Holy Place is the great fair or exchange of the tribe or nation. Even to the present day, Mecca, at the time of the great concourse of worshippers at the tomb of the Prophet, is a mart for the most active traffic among the merchant pilgrims, who form the caravans from all quarters of the Mahometan world (4).

We may conceive how the deep and awful stillness, which ought to have prevailed within the inner courts, dedicated to the adoration of the people—how the quiet prayer of the solitary worshipper, and the breathless silence of the multitude, while the priests were performing the more important ceremonies, either offering the national sacrifice, or entering the Holy Place, must have been interrupted by the close neighbourhood of this disorderly market. How dissonant must have been the noises of the bleating sheep, the lowing cattle, the clamours and disputes, and all the tumult and confusion thus crowded into a space of no great extent. No doubt the feelings of the more devout must long before have been shocked by this desecration of the holy precincts; and when Jesus commanded the expulsion of all these traders out of the court of the Temple, from the almost unresisting submission with which they abandoned their lucrative posts, at the command of one invested in no public authority, and who could have appeared to them no more than a simple Galilean peasant, it is clear that this assertion of the sanctity of the Temple must have been a popular act with the ma-

Expulsion  
of these  
traders.

(1) John, ii. 14. 25.

(2) According to Hug, "the ancient imposts which were introduced before the Roman dominion were valued according to the Greek coinage; e.g. the taxes of the temple, Matt. xvii. 24. Joseph. B. J. vii. 6. 6. The offerings were paid in these, Mark, xii. 42. Luke, xxi. 2. A payment which proceeded from the Temple treasury, was made according to the ancient national payment by weight, Matt. xxvi. 15. [This is very doubtful.] But in common business, trade, wages, sale

etc., the assis and denarius and Roman coin were usual. Matt. x. 29. Luke, xii. 6. Matt. xx. 2. Mark, xiv. 5. John, xii. 5. vi. 7. The more modern state taxes are likewise paid in the coin of the nation which exercises at the time the greatest authority. Matt. xxii. 19. Mark, xii. 15. Luke, xx. 24." Vol. i, p. 14. After all, however, some of these words may be translations

(3) Heeren, Ideen. passim.

(4) Burckhardt, Travels in Arabia.

jority of the worshippers (1). Though Jesus is said personally to have exerted himself, assisting with a light scourge probably in driving out the cattle, it is not likely that if he had stood alone, either the calm and commanding dignity of his manner, or even his appeal to the authority of the Sacred Writings, which forbade the profanation of the Temple as a place of merchandise, would have overpowered the sullen obstinacy of men engaged in a gainful traffic, sanctioned by ancient usage. The same profound veneration for the Temple, which took such implacable offence at the subsequent language of Jesus, would look with unallayed admiration on the zeal for "the Father's House," which would not brook the intrusion of worldly pursuits, or profane noises within its hallowed gates.

Expectations raised by this event.

Of itself, then, this act of Jesus might not amount to the assumption of authority over the Temple of God: it was, perhaps, no more than a courageous zealot for the law might have done (2); but combined with the former mysterious rumours about his character and his miraculous powers, it invested him at once in the awful character of one, in whose person *might* appear the long-desired, the long expected Messiah. The multitude eagerly throng around him, and demand some supernatural sign of his divine mission. The establishment of the Law had been accompanied, according to the universal belief, with the most terrific demonstrations of Almighty power—the rocking of the earth, the blazing of the mountain. Would the restoration of the Theocracy in more ample power, and more enduring majesty, be unattended with the same appalling wonders? The splendid images in the highly figurative writings of the Prophets, the traditions, among the mass of the people equally authoritative, had prepared them to expect the coming of the Messiah to be announced by the obedient elements. It would have been difficult, by the most signal convulsions of nature, to have come up to their high-wrought expectations. Private acts of benevolence to individuals, preternatural cures of diseases, or the restoration of disordered faculties, fell far beneath the notions of men, blind, perhaps, to the moral beauty of such actions. They required public, if we may so speak, national miracles, and those of the most stupendous nature. To their demand, Jesus calmly answered by an obscure and somewhat oracular allusion to the remote event of his own resurrection, the one great "sign" of Christianity, to which it is remarkable that Christ constantly refers,

(1) I think these considerations make it less improbable that this event should have taken place on two separate occasions, and under similar circumstances. The account of St. John places this incident at this period of our Lord's life; the other Evangelists during his last visit to Jerusalem. I confess, indeed, for my own part, that even if it be an error in chronological ar-

rangement in one or other of the Evangelists, my faith in the historical reality of the event would not be in the least shaken.

(2) Legally only the magistrate (*i.e.* the Sanhedrin), or a Prophet, could rectify abuses in the Temple of God. A Prophet must show his commission by some miracle or prediction. Grotius and Whitby.



when required to ratify his mission by some public miracle (1). The gesture, by which he probably confined his meaning to the temple of his body, which though destroyed, was to be raised up again in three days, was seen, indeed, by his disciples, yet, even by them, but imperfectly understood; by the people in general his language seemed plainly to imply the possible destruction of the Temple. An appalling thought, and feebly counterbalanced by the assertion of his power to rebuild it in three days!

This misapprehended speech struck on the most sensitive chord in the high-strung religious temperament of the Jewish people. Their national pride, their national existence, were identified with the inviolability of the Temple. Their passionate and zealous fanaticism on this point can scarcely be understood but after the profound study of their history. In older times, the sad and loathsome death of Antiochus Epiphanes, in more recent, the fate of Crassus, perishing amid the thirsty sands of the desert, and of Pompey, with his headless trunk exposed to the outrages of the basest of mankind on the strand of Egypt, had been construed into manifest visitations of the Almighty, in revenge for the plunder and profanation of his Temple. Their later history is full of the same spirit; and even in the horrible scenes of the fatal siege by Titus, this indelible passion survived all feelings of nature or of humanity: the fall of the Temple was like the bursting of the heart of the nation.

Reverence  
of the  
Jews for  
the Tem-  
ple.

From the period at which Herod the Great had begun to restore the dilapidated work of Zorobabel, forty-six years had elapsed, and still the magnificence of the king, or the wealth and devotion of the principal among the people, had found some new work on which to expend those incalculable riches, which, from these sources, the tribute of the whole nation, and the donations of the pious, continued to pour into the Temple treasury. And this was the building of which Jesus, as he was understood, could calmly contemplate the fall, and daringly promise the immediate restoration. To their indignant murmurs, Jesus, it should seem, made no reply. The explanation would, perhaps, have necessarily led to a more distinct prediction of his own death and resurrection, than it was yet expedient to make, especially on so public a scene. But how deeply this mistaken speech sunk into the popular mind, may be estimated, from its being adduced as the most serious charge against Jesus at his trial; and the bitterest scorn, with which he was followed to his crucifixion, exhausted itself in a fierce and sarcastic allusion to this supposed assertion of power.

Their ex-  
pectations  
disap-  
pointed.

Still, although with the exasperated multitude the growing veneration of Jesus might be checked by this misapprehended speech, a more profound impression had been made among some of the

1; Compare Matt. xii. 40.

Nicodemus.

more thinking part of the community. Already one, if not more members, of the Sanhedrin, began to look upon him with interest, perhaps with a secret inclination to espouse his doctrines. That one, named Nicodemus, determined to satisfy himself by a personal interview, as to the character and pretensions of the new Teacher (1). Nicodemus had hitherto been connected with the Pharisaic party, and he dreaded the jealousy of that powerful sect, who, though not yet in declared hostility against Jesus, watched, no doubt, his motions with secret aversion; for they could not but perceive that he made no advances towards them, and treated with open disregard their minute and austere observance of the literal and traditionary law, their principles of separation from the "unclean" part of the community, and their distinctive dress and deportment. The popular and accessible demeanour of Jesus showed at once that he had nothing in common with the spirit of this predominant religious faction. Nicodemus, therefore, chooses the dead of the night to obtain his secret interview with Jesus; he salutes him with a title, that of *rabbi*, assumed by none but those who were at once qualified and authorised to teach in public; and he recognises at once his divine mission, as avouched by his wonderful works. But, with astonishment almost overpowering, the Jewish ruler hears the explanation of the first principles of the new religion. When the heathen proselyte was admitted into Judaism, he was considered to be endowed with new life: he was separated from all his former connections; he was born again to higher hopes, to more extended knowledge, to a more splendid destiny (1). But now, even the Jew of the most unimpeachable descent from Abraham, the Jew of the highest estimation, so as to have been chosen into the court of Sanhedrin, and who had maintained the strictest obedience to the law, in order to become a member of the new community, required a change no less complete. He was to pass through the ceremony emblematic of moral purification. To him, as to the most unclean of strangers, baptism was to be the mark of his initiation into the new faith; and a secret internal transmutation was to take place by divine agency in his heart, which was to communicate a new principle of moral life. Without this, he could not attain to that which he had hitherto supposed either the certain privilege of his Israelitish descent, or at least of his conscientious adherence to the law. Eternal life, Jesus declared, was to depend solely on the reception of the Son of God, who, he not obscurely intimated, had descended from heaven, was present in his person, and was not universally received, only from the want

(1) John, iii. 1-21.

(2) A gentile proselyted, and a slave set free, is as a child new born; he must know no more of his kindred. Maimonides. Lightfoot. Harm. Ev.

This notion of a second moral birth is by no means uncommon in the East. The Sanscrit name of a Brahmin is *dwija*, the twice born. Bopp. Gloss. Sanscr.

of moral fitness to appreciate his character. This light was too pure to be admitted into the thick darkness which was brooding over the public mind, and rendered it impenetrable by the soft and quiet rays of the new doctrine. Jesus, in short, almost without disguise or reservation, announced himself to the wondering ruler as the Messiah, while, at the same time, he enigmatically foretold his rejection by the people. The age was not ripe for the exhibition of the Divine Goodness in his person; it still yearned for a revelation of the terrible, destructive, revengeful *Power* of the Almighty — a national deity which should embody, as it were, the prevailing sentiments of the nation. Nor came he to fulfil that impious expectation of Jewish pride—the condemnation of the world, of all Gentile races, to the worst calamities, while on Israel alone his blessings were to be showered with exclusive bounty (1). He came as a common benefactor—as an universal Saviour—to the whole human race. Nicodemus, it should seem, left the presence of Jesus, if not a decided convert, yet impressed with still deeper reverence. Though never an avowed disciple, yet, with other members of the Sanhedrin, he was only restrained by his dread of the predominant party: more than once we find him seizing opportunities of showing his respect and attachment for the teacher, whose cause he had not courage openly to espouse; and, perhaps, his secret influence, with that of others similarly disposed, may, for a time, have mitigated or obstructed the more violent designs of the hostile party.

Thus ended the first visit of Jesus to Jerusalem since his assumption of a public character. His influence had, in one class probably, made considerable, though secret, progress; with others, a dark feeling of hostility had been more deeply rooted; while this very difference of sentiment was likely to increase the general suspense and interest, as to the future development of his character. As yet, it should seem, unless in that most private interview with Nicodemus, he had not openly avowed his claim to the title of the Messiah: an expression of St. John (2), “he did not trust himself to them,” seems to imply the extreme caution and reserve which he maintained towards all the converts which he made during his present visit to Jerusalem.

(1) Quæ sequuntur inde a versiculo decimo septimo proprie ad Judæos spectant, et haud dubie dicta sunt a Domino contra opinionem illam impiam et in genus humanum iniquam, cum existimarent Messiam non nisi Judaicum populum liberaturum, reliquas vero gentes omnes suppli-

ciis atrocissimis affecturum, penitusque perditurum esse. Titman. Mel. in Joan. p. 128.

(2) John, ii. 24. οὐκ ἐπίστευεν ἑαυτὸν; he did not trust himself to them, he did not commit himself.



## CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC LIFE OF JESUS FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND PASSOVER.

Departure  
from Jeru-  
salem.

ON the dispersion of the strangers from the metropolis, at the close of the Passover, Jesus, with his more immediate followers, passed a short time in Judæa, where such multitudes crowded to the baptism administered by his disciples, that the adherents of John began to find the concourse to their master somewhat diminished. The Baptist had removed his station to the other side of the Jordan, and fixed himself by a stream, which afforded a plentiful supply of water, near the town of Salim, in Peræa. The partisans of John, not it should seem without jealousy, began to dispute concerning the relative importance of the baptism of their master, and that of him whom they were disposed to consider his rival. But these unworthy feelings were strongly repressed by John. In terms still more emphatic he re-asserted his own secondary station : he was but the paronymph, the humble attendant on the bridegroom, Christ the bride-groom himself : his doctrine was that of earth, that of Christ was from heaven ; in short, he openly announces Jesus as the Son of the Almighty Father, and as the author of everlasting life (1).

John the  
Baptist,  
and Herod.

The career of John was drawing to a close. His new station in Peræa was within the dominions of Herod Antipas. On the division of the Jewish kingdom at the death of Herod the Great, Galilee and Peræa had formed the tetrarchate of Antipas. Herod was engaged in a dangerous war with Aretas, king of Arabia Petræa, whose daughter he had married. But having formed an incestuous connection with the wife of his brother, Herod Philip, his Arabian queen indignantly fled to her father, who took up arms to revenge her wrongs against her guilty husband (2). How far Herod could depend in this contest on the loyalty of his subjects, was extremely doubtful. It is possible he might entertain hopes that the repudiation of a foreign alliance, ever hateful to the Jews, and the union with a branch of the Asmonean line (for Herodias was the daughter of Herod the Great, by Mariamne), might counterbalance in the popular estimation the injustice and criminality of his marriage with his brother's wife (3). The influence of John (according to Josephus) was almost unlimited. The subjects, and even the sol-

(1) John, iii. 22. 36.

(2) Luke, iii. 19. Matt. xiv. 3. 5. Mark, vi. 17. 20.

(3) This natural view of the subject appears to me to harmonise the accounts in the gospels

with that of Josephus. Josephus traces the persecution of the Baptist to Herod's dread of popular tumult and insurrection, without mentioning the real cause of that dread, which we find in the Evangelic narrative.

diery, of the tetrarch crowded with devout submission around the Prophet. On his decision might depend the wavering loyalty of the whole province. But John denounced with open indignation the royal incest, and declared the marriage with a brother's wife to be a flagrant violation of the law. Herod, before long, ordered him to be seized and imprisoned in the strong fortress of Machærus, on the remote border of his transjordanic territory.

Jesus, in the mean time, apprehensive of the awakening jealousy of the Pharisees, whom his increasing success inflamed to more avowed animosity, left the borders of Judæa, and proceeded on his return to Galilee (1). The nearer road lay through the province of Samaria (2). The mutual hatred between the Jews and Samaritans, ever since the secession of Sanballat, had kept the two races not merely distinct, but opposed to each other with the most fanatical hostility. This animosity, instead of being allayed by time, had but grown the more inveterate, and had recently been embittered by acts, according to Josephus, of wanton and unprovoked outrage on the part of the Samaritans. During the administration of Coponius, certain of this hateful race, early in the morning on one of the days of the passover, had stolen into the temple at Jerusalem, and defiled the porticoes and courts by strewing them with dead men's bones — an abomination the most offensive to the Jewish principles of cleanliness and sanctity (3). Still later, they had frequently taken advantage of the position in which their district lay, directly between Judæa and Galilee, to interrupt the concourse of the religious Galileans to the capital (4). Jealous that such multitudes should pass their sacred mountain, Gerizim, to worship in the temple at Jerusalem, they often waylaid the incautious pilgrim, and thus the nearest road to Jerusalem had become extremely insecure. Our history will show how calmly Jesus ever pursued his course through these conflicting elements of society, gently endeavoured to allay the implacable schism, and set the example of that mild and tolerant spirit, so beautifully embodied in his precepts. He passed on in quiet security through the dangerous district, and it is remarkable that here, safe from the suspicious vigilance of the Pharisaic party, among these proscribed aliens from the hopes of Israel, he more distinctly and publicly than he had hitherto done, avowed his title as the Messiah, and developed that leading characteristic of his religion, the abolition of all local and national deities, and the promulgation of one comprehensive faith, in which the great Eternal Spirit was to be worshipped by all mankind in "spirit and in truth."

There was a well (5) near the gates of Sichem, a name which by

(1) Matt. iv. 12.; Mark, i. 14.; Luke, iv. 14.

(2) John, iv. 1. 32.

(3) Hist. of the Jews, ii. 154.

(4) Ibid. 169.

(5) Tradition still points to this well, about a mile distant from the walls of Sichem, which Maundrell supposes to have extended farther. A church was built over it by the Empress Helena.

Jesus passes through Samaria.

Hostility of Jews and Samaritans.

the Jews had been long perverted into the opprobrious term *Sichar* (1). This spot, according to immemorial tradition, the patriarch Jacob had purchased, and here were laid the bones of Joseph, his elder son, to whose descendant, Ephraim, this district had been assigned. *Sichem* lay in a valley between the two famous mountains *Ebal* and *Gerizim*, on which the law was read, and ratified by the acclamations of the assembled tribes; and on the latter height stood the rival temple of the Samaritans, which had so long afflicted the more zealous Jews by its daring opposition to the one chosen sanctuary on mount *Moriah*. The well bore the name of the patriarch; and while his disciples entered the town to purchase provisions (2), a traffic from which probably few, except the disciples of Christ, would not have abstained (3), except in extreme necessity, Jesus reposed by its margin. It was the sultry hour of noon, about twelve o'clock (4), when a woman, as is the general usage in the East, where the females commonly resort to the wells or tanks to obtain water for all domestic uses, approached the well. Jesus, whom she knew not to be her countryman, either from his dress, or perhaps his dialect or pronunciation, in which the inhabitants of the Ephraimitish district of Samaria differed both from the Jews and Galileans, to her astonishment, asked her for water to quench his thirst. For in general the lip of a Jew, especially a Pharisaic Jew, would have shrunk in disgust from the purest element in a vessel defiled by the hand of a Samaritan. Drawing, as usual, his similitudes from the present circumstances, Jesus excites the wonder of the woman by speaking of living waters at his command, waters which were to nourish the soul for everlasting life: he increases her awe by allusions which show more than mortal knowledge of her own private history (she was living in concubinage, having been married to five husbands), and at length clearly announces that the local worship, both on *Gerizim* and at *Jerusalem*, was to give place to a more sublime and comprehensive faith. The astonished woman confesses her belief that, on the coming of the *Messiah*, truths equally wonderful may be announced. Jesus, for the first time, distinctly and unequivocally declares himself to be the *Messiah* (5). On the return of the disciples from the town, their

but it is now entirely destroyed. "It is dug in a firm rock, and contains about three yards in diameter, and thirty-five in depth, five of which we found full of water." Maundrell, p. 62.

(1) From a Hebrew word meaning a "lie" or an "idol." The name had no doubt grown into common use, as it could not be meant by the evangelists in an offensive sense.

(2) According to the traditions they might buy of them, use their labour, or say amen to their benedictions (*Beracoth*, i. 8.), lodge in their towns, but not receive any gift or kindness from them *Buxtorf*, *Lex Talm.* 1370. *Lightfoot* in loc.

(3) Probably the more rigid would have re-

frained, even from this permitted intercourse, unless in cases of absolute necessity.

(4) This is the usual opinion. *Dr. Townson*, in his ingenious argument to prove that the hours of John are not Roman or Jewish but Asiatic, adduces this passage, as in his favour, the evening being the usual time at which the women resort to the wells. On the other hand it is observed that noon was the usual time of dinner among the Jews, and the disciples probably entered the town for provisions for that meal.

(5) *Leclerc* observes that Jesus spoke with more freedom to the woman of Samaria, as he had no fear of sedition, or violent attempts to make him a king. On John, iv. 26.



Jewish prejudices are immediately betrayed at beholding their master thus familiarly conversing with a woman of the hateful race : on the other hand the intelligence of the woman runs rapidly through the town, and the Samaritans crowd forth in eager interest to behold and listen to the extraordinary teacher.

The nature and origin of the Samaritan belief in the Messiah is even a more obscure question than that of the Jews (1). That belief was evidently more clear and defined than the vague expectation which prevailed throughout the East, still it was probably, like that of the Jews, by no means distinct or definite. It is generally supposed that the Samaritans, admitting only the law, must have rested their hope solely on some ambiguous or latent prediction in the books of Moses, who had foretold the coming of another and a mightier prophet than himself. But though the Samaritans may not have admitted the authority of the prophets as equal to that of the law ; though they had not installed them in the regular and canonised code of their sacred books, it does not follow that they were unacquainted with them, or that they did not listen with devout belief to the more general promises, which by no means limited the benefits of the Messiah's coming to the local sanctuary of Jerusalem, or to the line of the Jewish kings. There appear some faint traces of a belief in the descent of the Messiah from the line of Joseph, of which, as belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, the Samaritans seem to have considered themselves the representatives (2). Nor is it improbable, from the subsequent rapid progress of the doctrines of Simon Magus, which were deeply impregnated with Orientalism (3), that the Samaritan notion of the Messiah had already a strong Magian or Babylonian tendency. On the other hand, if their expectations rested on less definite grounds, the Samaritans were unenslaved by many of those fatal prejudices of the Jews, which so completely temporalised their notions of the Messiah, and were free from that rigid and exclusive pride which so jealously appropriated the divine promises. If the Samaritans could not pretend to an equal share in the splendid anticipations of the

Samaritan  
belief in  
the Mes-  
siah.

(1) Bertholdt, ch. vii. which contains extracts from the celebrated Samaritan letters, and references to the modern writers who have translated them, and discussed their purport. Quæ vero fuerit spei Messianæ ratio neque ex hoc loco, neque ex ullo alio antiquiore monumento accuratius intelligi potest, et ex recentiorum demum Samaritanorum epistolis innuitur. Atque his testibus prophetam quemdam illustrem venturum esse sperant, cui observaturi sint populi ac credituri in illum, et in legem et in montem Garizim, qui fidem Mosaicam evecturus sit, tabernaculum restitutus in monte Garizim, populum suum beaturus, postea moriturus et sepeliendus apud Josephum (*i. e.* in tribu Ephraim). Quo tempore venturus sit, id nemini præter Deum cognitum esse. Gesenius in this note to the curious Samaritan poems which he has published,

(p. 75.) proceeds to say that his name is to be "Hasch-hab or Hat-hab, which he translates conversor (converter) as converting the people to a higher state of religion. The Messiah Ben Joseph of the Rabbins, he observes, is of a much later date. Quotations concerning the later may be found in Eisenmenger, ii. 720.

(2) We still want a complete and critical edition of the Samaritan chronicle (the Liber Josuæ), which may throw light on the character and tenets of this remarkable branch of the Jewish nation. Though in its present form a comparatively modern compilation, it appears to me, from the fragments hitherto edited, to contain manifest vestiges of very ancient tradition. See an abstract at the end of Hottinger's Dissertationes anti-Morinianæ.

(3) Mosheim, ii. 19.

ancient prophets, they were safer from their mis-interpretation. They had no visions of universal dominion; they looked not to Samaria or Sichem to become the metropolis of some mighty empire. They had some legend of the return of Moses to discover the sacred vessels concealed near mount Gerizim (1), but they did not expect to see the banner raised, and the conqueror go forth to beat the nations to the earth and prostrate mankind before their re-established theocracy. They might even be more inclined to recognise the Messiah in the person of a purely religious reformer, on account of the overbearing confidence with which the rival people announced their hour of triumph, when the Great King should erect his throne on Sion, and punish all the enemies of the chosen race, among whom the "foolish people," as they were called, "who dwelt at Sichem (2)," would not be the last to incur the terrible vengeance. A Messiah who would disappoint the insulting hopes of the Jews would, for that very reason, be more acceptable to the Samaritans.

Samaritan  
Sanhe-  
drin.

The Samaritan commonwealth was governed, under the Roman supremacy, by a council or sanhedrin : but this body had not assumed the pretensions of a divinely inspired hierarchy; nor had they a jealous and domineering sect, like that of the Pharisees, in possession of the public instruction, and watching every new teacher who did not wear the garb, or speak the Shibboleth of their faction, as guilty of an invasion of their peculiar province. But, from whatever cause, the reception of Jesus among the Samaritans, was strongly contrasted with that among the Jews. They listened with reverence, and entreated him to take up his permanent abode within their province; and many among them distinctly acknowledged him as the Messiah and Saviour of the world.

Second  
miracle in  
Caper-  
naum.

Still a residence, longer than was necessary in the infected air, as the Jews would suppose it, of Samaria, would have strengthened the growing hostility of the ruling powers, and of the prevailing sect among the Jews. After two days, therefore, Jesus proceeded on his journey, re-entered Galilee, and publicly assumed, in that province, his office as the teacher of a new religion. The report of a second, and more extraordinary miracle than that before performed in the town of Cana, tended to establish the fame of his actions in Jerusalem, which had been disseminated by those Galileans who had returned more quickly from the passover, and had excited a general interest to behold the person of whom such wonderful rumours were spread abroad (3). The nature of the miracle, the healing a youth who lay sick at Capernaum, about twenty-five

(1) Hist. of the Jews, ii. 160.

(2) There be two manner of nations which my heart abhorreth, and the third is no nation. They that sit upon the mountain of Samaria, and they that dwell among the Philistines, and

that foolish people that dwell at Sichem. Ecclesiast. i. 25, 26.

(3) Matt. iv. 13-17.; Mark, i. 14, 15.; Luke, iv. 14, 15.; John, iv. 43-45.

miles distant from Cana, where he then was; the station of the father, at whose entreaty he restored the son to health (he was probably on the household establishment of Herod), could not fail to raise the expectation to a higher pitch, and to prepare the inhabitants of Galilee to listen with eager deference to the new doctrines (1).

One place alone received the son of Mary with cold and inhospitable unconcern, and rejected his claims with indignant violence — his native town of Nazareth. The history of this transaction is singularly true to human nature (2). Where Jesus was unknown, the awe-struck imagination of the people, excited by the fame of his wonderful works, beheld him already arrayed in the sanctity of a prophetic, if not of a divine, mission. Nothing intruded on their thoughts to disturb their reverence for the commanding gentleness of his demeanour, the authoritative persuasiveness of his language, the holiness of his conduct, the celebrity of his miracles: he appeared before them in the pure and unmingled dignity of his public character. But the inhabitants of Nazareth had to struggle with old impressions, and to exalt their former familiarity into a feeling of deference or veneration. In Nazareth he had been seen from his childhood; and though gentle, blameless, popular, nothing had occurred, up to the period of his manhood, to place him so much above the ordinary level of mankind. His father's humble station and employment had, if we may so speak, still farther undignified the person of Jesus to the mind of his fellow-townsmen. In Nazareth Jesus was still "the carpenter's son." We think, likewise, that we discover in the language of the Nazarenes something of local jealousy against the more favoured town of Capernaum. If Jesus intended to assume a public and distinguished character, why had not his native place the fame of his splendid works? why was Capernaum honoured, as the residence of the new prophet, rather than the city in which he had dwelt from his youth?

It was in the synagogue of Nazareth, where Jesus had hitherto been a humble and devout listener, that he stood up in the character of a Teacher. According to the usage, the chazan or minister of the synagogue (3), whose office it was to deliver the volume of the law or the prophets appointed to be read to the person to whom that function had fallen, or who might have received permission from the rulers of the synagogue to address the congregation, gave it into the hands of Jesus. Jesus opened on the passage in the beginning of the 16th chapter of Isaiah (4), by universal

Nazareth.  
Inhospitable reception of Jesus.

Jesus in the synagogue.

(1) John, iv. 46—54.

(2) Luke, iv. 16—30. There appears to be an allusion (John, iv. 44.) to this incident, which may have taken place before the second miracle.

(3) It is said that on the Sabbath the law was read in succession by seven persons—a priest, a Levite, and five Israelites—and never on any

other day by less than three. The prophets were read by any one; in general one of the former readers, whom the minister might summon to the office.

(4) It is of some importance to the chronology of the life of Christ, to ascertain whether this pericope or portion was that appointed in the or-



consent applied to the coming of the Messiah, and under its beautiful images describing with the most perfect truth the character of the new religion. It spoke of good tidings to the poor, of consolation in every sorrow, of deliverance from every affliction:—"He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bound." It went on, as it were, to announce the instant fulfilment of the prediction, in the commencement of the "acceptable year of the Lord;" but before it came to the next clause, which harmonised ill with the benign character of the new faith, and spoke of "the day of vengeance," he broke off and closed the book. He proceeded, probably at some length, to declare the immediate approach of these times of wisdom and peace.

The whole assembly was in a state of pleasing astonishment at the ease of his delivery, and the sweet copiousness of his language; they could scarcely believe that it was the youth whom they had so often seen, the son of a humble father, in their streets, and who had enjoyed no advantages of learned education. Some of them, probably either by their countenance, or tone, or gesture, expressed their incredulity, or even their contempt, for Joseph's son; for Jesus at once declared his intention of performing no miracle to satisfy the doubts of his unbelieving countrymen:—"No prophet is received with honour in his own country." This avowed preference of other places before the dwelling of his youth; this refusal to grant to Nazareth any share in the fame of his extraordinary works, embittered perhaps by the suspicion that the general prejudice against their town might be strengthened, at least not discountenanced, as it might have been, by the residence of so distinguished a citizen within their walls—the reproof so obviously concealed in the words and conduct of Jesus, mingled no doubt with other fanatical motives, wrought the whole assembly to such a pitch of frenzy, that they expelled Jesus from the synagogue. Nazareth lies in a valley, from which a hill immediately rises; they hurried him up the slope, and were preparing to cast him down from the abrupt cliff on the other side, when they found that the intended victim of their wrath had disappeared.

Violence  
of the  
Nazarenes.

Capernaum the  
chief residence of  
Jesus

Jesus retired to Capernaum, which from this time became, as it were, his head-quarters (1). This place was admirably situated for his purpose, both from the facility of communication, as well by land as by the lake, with many considerable and flourishing towns, and of escape into a more secure region, in case of any

ordinary course of reading, or one selected by Jesus. But we cannot decide this with any certainty; nor is it clear that the distribution of the lessons, according to the ritual of that period, was the same with the present liturgy of the

Jews. According to that, the 16th chapter of Isaiah would have been read about the end of August. Macknight and some other harmonists lay much stress on this point.

(1) Luke, iv. 31, 32.

threatened persecution. It lay towards the northern extremity of the lake or sea of Gennesareth (1). On the land side it was a centre from which the circuit of both Upper and Lower Galilee might begin. The countless barks of the fishermen employed upon the lake, many of whom became his earliest adherents, could transport him with the utmost ease to any of the cities on the western bank ; while, if danger approached from Herod or the ruling powers of Galilee, he had but to cross to the opposite shore, the territory, at least at the commencement of his career, of Philip, the most just and popular of the sons of Herod, and which on his death reverted to the Roman government. Nor was it an unfavourable circumstance, that he had most likely secured the powerful protection of the officer attached to the court of Herod, whose son he had healed, and who probably resided at Capernaum.

The first act of his public career was the permanent attachment to his person, and the investing in the delegated authority of teachers of the new religion, four out of the twelve who afterwards became the apostles. Andrew and Peter were originally of Bethsaida, at the north eastern extremity of the lake, but the residence of Peter appears to have been at Capernaum. James and John were brothers, the sons of Zebedee (2). All these men had united themselves to Jesus, immediately after his baptism ; the latter, if not all, had probably attended upon him during the festival in Jerusalem, but had returned to their usual avocations. Jesus saw them on the shore of the lake,—two of them were actually employed in fishing, the others at a little distance were mending their nets. At the well-known voice of their master, confirmed by the sign of the miraculous draught of fishes (3), which impressed Peter with so much awe, that he thought himself unworthy of standing in the presence of so wonderful a Being, they left their ships and followed him into the town ; and though they appear to have resumed their humble occupations, on which, no doubt, their livelihood depended, it should seem that from this time they might be considered as the regular attendants of Jesus.

Apostles  
chosen.

The reception of Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum was very different from that which he encountered in Nazareth. He was heard on the regular day of teaching, the Sabbath, not only undisturbed, but with increasing reverence and awe (4). And, indeed, if the inhabitants of Nazareth were offended, and the Galileans in general astonished at the appearance of the humble Jesus in the character of a public teacher, the tone and language which he assumed was not likely to allay their wonder. The remarkable

Jesus  
in the  
synagogue  
of Capernaum.

(1) This is the usual position of Capernaum, but it rests on very uncertain grounds, and some circumstances would induce me to adopt Lightfoot's opinion, that it was much nearer to the southern end of the lake.

(2) Matt. iv. 22. ; Mark, i. 17.—20. ; Luke, v. 1—11.

(3) This supposes, as is most probable, that Luke, v. 1—11. refers to the same transaction.

(4) Luke, iv. 31—38. ; Mark, i. 21, 22.

expression, " he speaks as one having authority and not as the scribes," seems to imply more than the extraordinary power and persuasiveness of his language.

His mode  
of teach-  
ing differ-  
ent from  
that of the  
Rabbins.

The ordinary instructors of the people, whether under the name of scribes, lawyers, or rabbis, rested their whole claim to the public attention on the established sacred writings. They were the conservators, and perhaps personally *ordained* interpreters of the law, with its equally sacred traditionary comment; but they pretended to no authority, not originally derived from these sources. They did not stand forward as legislators, but as accredited expositors of the law; not as men directly inspired from on high, but as men who, by profound study and intercourse with the older wise men, were best enabled to decide on the dark, or latent, or ambiguous sense of the inspired writings; or who had received, in regular descent, the more ancient Cabala, the accredited tradition. Although, therefore, they had completely enslaved the public mind, which revered the sayings of the masters or rabbis equally with the original text of Moses and the prophets; though it is quite clear that the spiritual rabbinical dominion, which at a later period established so arbitrary a despotism over the understanding of the people, was already deeply rooted, still the basis of their supremacy rested on the popular reverence for the sacred writings. "It is written," was the sanction of all the rabbinical decrees, however those decrees might misinterpret the real meaning of the law, or "add burdens to the neck of the people," by no means intended by the wise and humane lawgiver.

Jesus came forth as a public teacher in a new and opposite character. His authority rested on no previous revelation, excepting as far as his divine commission had been foreshown in the law and the prophets. He prefaced his addresses with the unusual formulary, "I say unto you." Perpetually displaying the most intimate familiarity with the Sacred Writings, instantly silencing or baffling his adversaries by adducing, with the utmost readiness and address, texts of the law and the prophets according to the accredited interpretation, yet his ordinary language evidently assumed a higher tone. He was the direct, immediate representative of the wisdom of the Almighty Father; he appeared as equal, as superior, to Moses; as the author of a new revelation, which, although it was not to destroy the law, was in a certain sense to supersede it, by the introduction of a new and original faith. Hence the implacable hostility manifested against Jesus, not merely by the fierce, the fanatical, the violent, or the licentious, by all who might take offence at the purity and gentleness of his precepts, but by the better and more educated among the people, the scribes, the lawyers, the pharisees. Jesus at once assumed a superiority not merely over these teachers of the law, this acknowledged



religious aristocracy, whose reputation, whose interests, and whose pride were deeply pledged to the maintenance of the existing system, but he set himself above those inspired teachers, of whom the rabbis were but the interpreters. Christ uttered commandments which had neither been registered on the tablets of stone, nor defined in the more minute enactments in the book of Leviticus. He superseded at once by his simple word all that they had painfully learned, and regularly taught as the eternal, irrevocable word of God, perfect, complete, enduring no addition. Hence their perpetual endeavours to commit Jesus with the multitude, as disparaging or infringing the ordinances of Moses; endeavours which were perpetually baffled on his part, by his cautious compliance with the more important observances, and, notwithstanding the general bearing of his teaching towards the development of a higher and independent doctrine (1), his uniform respect for the letter as well as the spirit of the Mosaic institutes. But as the strength of the rabbinical hierarchy lay in the passionate jealousy of the people about the law, they never abandoned the hope of convicting Jesus on this ground, notwithstanding his extraordinary works, as a false pretender to the character of the Messiah. At all events they saw clearly that it was a struggle for the life and death of their authority. Jesus once acknowledged as the Christ, the whole fabric of their power and influence fell at once. The traditions, the Law itself, the skill of the scribe, the subtilty of the lawyer, the profound study of the rabbi, or the teacher in the synagogue and in the school, became obsolete; and the pride of superior wisdom, the long-enjoyed deference, the blind obedience with which the people had listened to their decrees, were gone by for ever. The whole hierarchy were to cede at once their rank and estimation to an humble and uninstructed peasant from Galilee, a region scorned by the better educated for its rudeness and ignorance (2), and from Nazareth, the most despised town in the despised province. Against such deep and rooted motives for animosity, which combined and knit together every feeling of pride, passion, habit, and interest, the simple and engaging demeanour of the Teacher, the beauty of the precepts, their general harmony with the spirit, however they might expand the letter of the law, the charities they breathed, the holiness they inculcated, the aptitude and imaginative felicity of the parables under which they were couched, the hopes they excited, the fears they allayed, the blessings and consolations they

Causes of  
the hostility  
of the  
ordinary  
teachers.

(1) Compare the whole of the Sermon on the Mount, especially Matt. v. 20—45.—the parables of the leaven and the grain of mustard seed—the frequent intimations of the comprehensiveness of the “kingdom of God,” as contrasted with the Jewish theocracy.

(2) See in the Compendium of the Talmud by Pinner of Berlin, intended as a kind of preface

to an edition and translation of the whole talmudical books, the curious passage (p. 60.) from the Erubin, in which the Jews and Galileans are contrasted. The Galileans did not preserve the pure speech, therefore did not preserve pure doctrine—the Galileans had no teacher, therefore no doctrine—the Galileans did not open the book, therefore they had no doctrine.

promised, all which makes the discourses of Jesus so confessedly superior to human morality, made little impression on this class, who in some respects, as the most intellectual, might be considered as in the highest state of advancement, and therefore most likely to understand the real spirit of the new religion. The authority of Jesus could not coexist with that of the Scribes and Pharisees; and this was the great principle of the fierce opposition and jealous hostility, with which he was in general encountered by the best instructed teachers of the people.

In Capernaum, however, no resistance seems to have been made to his success: the synagogue was open to him on every Sabbath; and wonderful cures, that of a demoniac in the synagogue itself, that of Simon's wife's mother, and of many others within the same town, established and strengthened his growing influence (1). From Capernaum he set forth to make a regular progress through the whole populous province of Galilee, which was crowded, if we are to receive the account of Josephus, with flourishing towns and cities, beyond almost any other region of the world (2). According to the statements of this author, the number of towns, and the population of Galilee, in a district of between fifty and sixty miles in length, and between sixty and seventy in breadth, was no less than 204 cities and villages, the least of which contained 15,000 souls (3). Reckoning nothing for smaller communities, and supposing each town and village to include the adjacent district, so as to allow of no scattered inhabitants in the country, the population of the province would amount to 3,060,000; of these, probably, much the larger proportion were of Jewish descent, and spoke a harsher dialect of the Aramaic, than that which prevailed in Judæa, though in many of the chief cities there was a considerable number of Syrian Greeks and of other foreign races (4). Each of these towns had one or more synagogues, in which the people met for the ordinary purposes of worship, while the more religious attended regularly at the festivals in Jerusalem. The province of Galilee with Peræa formed the tetrarchate of Herod Antipas, who, till his incestuous marriage, had treated the Baptist with respect, if not with deference, and does not appear at first to have interfered with the proceedings of Jesus. Though at one time decidedly hostile, he appears neither to have been very active in his opposition, nor to have entertained any deep or violent animosity against the person of Jesus, even at the time of his final trial. No doubt Jerusalem and

Progress  
through  
Galilee.

Populous-  
ness of  
Galilee.

Herod  
Antipas.

(1) Mark, i. 23—28.; Luke, iv. 33—37.; Matt. viii. 14, 15.; Mark, i. 29—31.; Luke, iv. 28—39.

(2) Matt. iv. 23—25.; Mark, i. 32—39.; Luke, iv. 40—44.

(3) Josephi Vita, ch. xlv. B. J. 111—111. 2.

(4) According to Strabo, Galilee was full of Egyptians, Arabians, and Phœnicians, lib. xvi.

Josephus states of Tiberias in particular, that it was inhabited by many strangers; Scythopolis was almost a Greek city. In Casarea, and many of the other towns, the most dreadful conflicts took place, at the commencement of the war, between the two races. Hist. of the Jews, ii. 234—236.

its adjacent province were the centre and stronghold of Jewish religious and political enthusiasm; the pulse beat stronger about the heart than at the extremities. Nor, whatever personal apprehensions Herod might have entertained of an aspirant to the name of the Messiah, whom he might suspect of temporal ambition, was he likely to be actuated by the same jealousy, as the Jewish Sanhedrin, of a teacher, who confined himself to religious instruction (1). His power rested on force, not on opinion; on the strength of his guards and the protection of Rome, not on the respect which belonged to the half religious, half political pre-eminence of the rulers in Jerusalem. That which made Jesus the more odious to the native government in Judæa, his disappointment of their hopes of a temporal Messiah, and his announcement of a revolution purely moral and religious, would allay the fears and secure the indifference of Herod; to him Christianity, however imperfectly understood, would appear less dangerous than fanatical Judaism. The Pharisees were in considerable numbers, and possessed much influence over the minds of the Galileans (2); but it was in Judæa that this overwhelming faction completely predominated, and swayed the public opinion with irresistible power. Hence the unobstructed success of Jesus in this remoter region of the Holy Land, and the wisdom of selecting that part of the country where, for a time at least, he might hope to pursue unmolested his career of blessing. During this first progress he seems to have passed from town to town uninterrupted, if not cordially welcomed. Either astonishment, or prudent caution, which dreaded to offend his numerous followers; or the better feeling which had not yet given place to the fiercer passions; or a vague hope that he might yet assume all that they thought wanting to the character of the Messiah, not only attracted around him the population of the towns through which he passed, but as he approached the borders, the inhabitants of Decapolis (the district beyond the Jordan), of Judæa, and even of Jerusalem, and the remoter parts of Peræa, thronged to profit both by his teaching, and by the wonderful cures which were wrought on all who were afflicted by the prevalent diseases of the country (3).

Jesus  
passes un-  
molested  
through  
Galilee.

How singular the contrast (familiarity with its circumstances, or deep and early reverence, prevent us from appreciating it justly) between the peaceful progress of the Son of Man, on the one hand healing maladies, relieving afflictions, restoring their senses to the dumb or blind; on the other gently instilling into the minds of the people those pure, and humane, and gentle principles of moral goodness, to which the wisdom of ages has been able to add nothing;

(1) The supposition of Grotius, adopted by Mr. Greswell, that Herod was absent at Rome during the interval between the imprisonment and the death of John, and therefore during

the first progress of Jesus, appears highly probable.

(2) Luke, v. 17.

(3) Matt. iv. 25.



Comparison with authors of other revolutions.

and every other event to which it can be compared, in the history of human kind. Compare the men who have at different periods wrought great and beneficial revolutions in the civil or the moral state of their kind; or those mythic personages, either deified men or humanised deities, which appear as the parents, or at some marked epoch in the history of different nations, embodying the highest notions of human nature or divine perfection to which the age or the people have attained—compare all these, in the most dispassionate spirit, with the impersonation of the divine goodness in Jesus Christ. It seems a conception, notwithstanding the progress in moral truth which had been made among the more intellectual of the Jews, and the nobler reasoners among the Greeks, so completely beyond the age, so opposite to the prevalent expectations of the times, as to add no little strength to the belief of the Christian in the divine origin of his faith. Was the sublime notion of the Universal Father, the God of Love, and the exhibition of as much of the divine nature as is intelligible to the limited faculties of man, his goodness and beneficent power, in the “Son of Man,” first developed in the natural progress of the human mind among the peasants of Galilee (1)? Or, as the Christian asserts with more faith, and surely not less reason, did the great Spirit, which created and animates the countless worlds, condescend to show this image and reflection of his own inconceivable nature, for the benefit of one race of created beings, to restore them to, and prepare them for, a higher and eternal state of existence?

Teaches in the synagogues and in the open air.

The synagogues, it has been said, appear to have been open to Jesus during the whole of his progress through Galilee; but it was not within the narrow walls of these buildings that he confined his instructions. It was in the open air, in the field, or in the vineyard, on the slope of the hill, or by the side of the lake, where the deck of one of his followers’ vessels formed a kind of platform or tribune, that he delighted to address the wondering multitudes. His language teems with allusions to external nature, which, it has often been observed, seem to have been drawn from objects immediately around him. It would be superfluous to attempt to rival, and unjust to an author of remarkable good sense and felicity of expression, to alter the language in which this peculiarity of Christ’s teaching has already been described:—“In the spring our Saviour went into the fields and sat down on a mountain, and made that discourse which is recorded in St. Matthew, and which is full of observations arising from the things which offered themselves to his sight. For when he exhorted his disciples to trust in God, he bade them behold the fowls of the air, which were then flying about them, and were fed by Divine Providence, though they did ‘not sow nor reap, nor

Manner of his discourses. Quotation from Jortin.

1) Compare the observations at the end of the first chapter.

gather into barns.' He bade them take notice of the lilies of the field which were then blown, and were so beautifully clothed by the same power, and yet 'toiled not' like the husbandmen who were then at work. Being in a place where they had a wide prospect of a cultivated land, he bade them observe how God caused the sun to shine, and the rain to descend upon the fields and gardens, even of the wicked and ungrateful. And he continued to convey his doctrine to them under rural images, speaking of good *trees* and corrupt *trees*—of wolves in *sheep's clothing*—of grapes not growing upon thorns, nor figs on thistles—of the folly of casting precious things to dogs and swine—of good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. Speaking at the same time to the people, many of whom were fishermen and lived much upon fish, he says, *What man of you will give his son a serpent, if he ask a fish?* Therefore when he said in the same discourse to his disciples, *Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill, and cannot be hid*, it is probable that he pointed to a city within their view, situated upon the brow of a hill. And when he called them *the salt of the earth*, he alluded, perhaps, to the husbandmen, who were manuring the ground : and when he compared every person who observed his precepts, to a man who built a house upon a rock, which stood firm ; and every one who slighted his word, to a man who built a house upon the sand, which was thrown down by the winds and floods—when he used this comparison, 'tis not improbable that he had before his eyes houses standing upon high ground, and houses standing in the valley in a ruinous condition, which had been destroyed by inundations (1)."

It was on his return to Capernaum, either at the close of the present or of a later progress through Galilee, that among the multitudes who had gathered around him from all quarters, he ascended an eminence, and delivered in a long continuous address the memorable Sermon on the Mount (2). It is not our design to enter at length on the trite, though in our opinion by no means exhausted, subject of Christian morality. We content ourselves with indicating some of those characteristic points which belong, as it were, to the historical development of the new religion, and cannot be distinctly comprehended unless in relation to the circumstances of the times : —

Sermon  
on the  
Mount.

Principles  
of Christian  
morality.

(1) Jortin's Discourses. The above is quoted and the idea is followed out at greater length and with equal beauty in Bishop Laws Reflections on the Life of Christ, at the end of his Theory of Religion.

(2) Scarcely any passage is more perplexing to the harmonist of the Gospels than the Sermon on the Mount, which appears to be inserted at two different places by St. Matthew and St. Luke. That the same striking truths should be delivered more than once in nearly the same language, or even that the same commanding situation should be more than once selected, from which to ad-

dress the people, appears not altogether improbable; but the difficulty lies in the accompanying incidents, which are almost the same, and could scarcely have happened twice. No writer who insists on the chronological order of the Evangelists, has, in my judgment, removed the difficulty. On the whole, though I have inserted my view of Christian morality, as derived from this memorable discourse, in this place, I am inclined to consider the chronology of St. Luke more accurate. Matt. v. vi. vii. Luke, vi. 20. to the end

1. Not in  
unison  
with the  
age.

1. The morality of Jesus was not in unison with the temper or the feelings of his age. II. It was universal morality, adapted for the whole human race, and for every period of civilisation. III. It was morality grounded on broad and simple principles, which had hitherto never been laid down as the basis of human action. I. The great principle of the Mosaic theocracy was the strict apportionment of temporal happiness or calamity, at least to the nation, if not to the individual, according to his obedience or his rebellion against the divine laws. The natural consequence of this doctrine seemed to be, that prosperity was the invariable sign of the divine approval, adversity of disfavour. And this, in the time of Jesus, appears to have been carried to such an extreme, that every malady, every infirmity, was an evidence of sin in the individual, or a punishment inherited from his guilty forefathers. The only question which arose about the man born blind was, whether his affliction was the consequence of his own or his parents' criminality: he bore in his calamity the hateful evidence that he was accursed of God. This principle was perpetually struggling with the belief in a future state, and an equitable adjustment of the apparent inequalities in the present life, to which the Jewish mind had gradually expanded; and with the natural humanity, inculcated by the spirit of the Mosaic law, towards their own brethren. But if the miseries of this life were an evidence of the divine anger, the blessings were likewise of his favour (1). Hence the prosperous, the wealthy, those exempt from human suffering and calamity, were accustomed to draw even a more false and dangerous line of demarcation than in ordinary cases, between themselves and their humble and afflicted brethren. The natural haughtiness which belonged to such superiority, acquired, as it were, a divine sanction; nor was any vice in the Jewish character more strongly reprov'd by Jesus, or more hostile to his reception as the Messiah. For when the kingdom of Heaven should come—when the theocracy should be restored in more than its former splendour—who so secure of its inestimable blessings as those who were already marked and designated by the divine favour? Among the higher orders the expectation of a more than ordinary share in the promised blessings might practically be checked from imprudently betraying itself, by the natural timidity of those who have much to lose, and by their reluctance to hazard any political convulsion. Yet nothing could be more inexplicable, or more contrary to the universal sentiment, than that Jesus should disregard the concurrence, and make no particular advances towards those who formed the spiritual as well as the temporal aristocracy of the

(1) Compare Mosheim, ii. 12. He considers this feeling almost exclusively prevalent among the Sadducees; but from many passages of our Lord's discourses with the Pharisees, it should

seem to have been almost universal. *Pauperes et miseros existimare debebant Deum criminibus et peccatis offendisse, justamque ejus ultionem sentire.*



nation—those whose possession of the highest station seemed, in a great degree, to prove their designation for such eminence by the Almighty. “Have any of the rulers believed in him (1)?” was the contemptuous, and, as they conceived, conclusive argument against his claims, adduced by the Pharisees. Jesus not only did not condescend to favour, he ran directly counter to this prevailing notion. He announced that the kingdom of Heaven was peculiarly prepared for the humble and the afflicted; his disciples were chosen from the lowest order; and it was not obscurely intimated, that his ranks would be chiefly filled by those who were undistinguished by worldly prosperity. Yet, on the other hand, there was nothing in his language to conciliate the passions of the populace, no address to the envious and discontented spirit of the needy to inflame them against their superiors. Popular, as he was, in the highest sense of the term, nothing could be farther removed than the Prophet of Nazareth from the demagogue. The “kingdom of Heaven” was opened only to those who possessed and cultivated the virtues of their lowly station—meekness, humility, resignation, peacefulness, patience; and it was only because these virtues were most prevalent in the humbler classes, that the new faith was addressed to them. The more fierce and violent of the populace rushed into the ranks of the zealot, and enrolled themselves among the partizans of Judas the Galilean. They thronged around the robber chieftain, and secretly propagated that fiery spirit of insurrection which led, at length, to the fatal war. The meek and peaceful doctrines of Jesus found their way only into meek and peaceful hearts; the benevolent character of his miracles touched not those minds which had only imbibed the sterner, not the humaner, spirit of the Mosaic law. Thus it was lowliness of character, rather than of station, which qualified the proselyte for the new faith—the absence, in short, of all those fierce passions which looked only to a conquering, wide-ruling Messiah: and it was in elevating these virtues to the highest rank, which to the many of all orders was treason against the hopes of Israel and the promises of God, that Jesus departed most widely from the general sentiment of his age and nation. He went still further; he annihilated the main principle of the theocracy—the administration of temporal rewards and punishments in proportion to obedience or rebellion—a notion which, though, as we have said, by no means justified by common experience, and weakened by the growing belief in another life, nevertheless still held its ground in the general opinion. Sorrow, as in one sense the distinguishing mark and portion of the new religion, became sacred; and the curse of God was, as it were, removed from the afflictions of mankind. His own disciples, he himself, were to undergo a fearful probation of suffering, which could

(1) John, vii. 48.

only be secure of its reward in another life. The language of Jesus confirmed the truth of the antisadducaic belief of the greater part of the nation, and assumed the certainty of another state of existence, concerning which, as yet, it spoke the current language; but which it was hereafter to expand into a more simple and universal creed, and mingle, if it may be so said, the sense of immortality with all the feelings and opinions of mankind.

Its uni-  
versality.

II. Nor was it to the different classes of the Jews alone, that the universal precepts of Christian morality expanded beyond the narrow and exclusive notions of the age and people. Jesus did not throw down the barrier which secluded the Jews from the rest of mankind, but he shook it to its base. Christian morality was not that of a sect, a race, or a nation, but of universal man: though necessarily delivered at times in Jewish language, couched under Jewish figures, and illustrated by local allusions, in its spirit it was diametrically opposite to Jewish. However it might make some provisions suited only to the peculiar state of the first disciples, yet in its essence, it may be said to be comprehensive as the human race, immutable as the nature of man. It had no political, no local no temporary precepts; it was, therefore, neither liable to be abrogated by any change in the condition of man, nor to fall into disuse, as belonging to a passed and obsolete state of civilisation. It may dwell within its proper kingdom, the heart of man, in every change of political relation—in the monarchy, the oligarchy, the republic. It may domesticate itself in any climate, amid the burning sands of Africa, or the frozen regions of the North; for it has no local centre, no temple, no Caaba, no essential ceremonies impracticable under any conceivable state of human existence. In fact it is, strictly speaking, no Law; it is no system of positive enactments; it is the establishment of certain principles, the enforcement of certain dispositions, the cultivation of a certain temper of mind, which the conscience is to apply to the ever-varying exigencies of time and place. This appears to me to be the distinctive peculiarity of Christian morals, a characteristic in itself most remarkable, and singularly so when we find this free and comprehensive system emanating from that of which the main-spring was its exclusiveness.

Its origi-  
nal prin-  
ciples.

III. The basis of this universality in Christian morals was the broad and original principles upon which it rested. If we were to glean from the later Jewish writings, from the beautiful aphorisms of other Oriental nations, which we cannot fairly trace to Christian sources, and from the Platonic and Stoic philosophy, their more striking precepts, we might find, perhaps, a counterpart to almost all the moral sayings of Jesus. But the same truth is of different importance as an unconnected aphorism, and as the groundwork of a complete system. No doubt the benevolence of the Creator had awakened grateful feelings, and kindled the most exquisite poetry of

expression in the hearts and from the lips of many before the coming of Christ; no doubt general humanity had been impressed upon mankind in the most vivid and earnest language. But the Gospel first placed these two great principles as the main pillars of the new moral structure : God the universal Father, mankind one brotherhood; God made known through the mediation of his Son, the image, and humanised type and exemplar of his goodness; mankind of one kindred, and therefore of equal rank in the sight of the Creator, and to be united in one spiritual commonwealth. Such were the great principles of Christian morals, shadowed forth at first, rather than distinctly announced, in condescension to the prejudices of the Jews, who, if they had been found worthy of appreciating the essential spirit of the new religion—if they had received Jesus as the promised Saviour – might have been collectively and nationally the religious parents and teachers of mankind.

Such was the singular position of Jesus with regard to his countrymen, the attempt to conciliate them to the new religion was to be fairly made; but the religion, however it might condescend to speak their language, could not forfeit or compromise, even for such an end, its primary and essential principles. Jesus therefore pursues his course, at one time paying the utmost deference, at another unavoidably offending the deep-rooted prejudices of the people. The inveterate and loathsome nature of the leprosy in Syria, the deep abhorrence with which the wretched victim of this disease was cast forth from all social fellowship, is well known to all who are even slightly acquainted with the Jewish law and usages. One of these miserable beings appealed, and not in vain, to the mercy of Jesus (1). He was instantaneously cured; but Jesus, whether to authenticate the cure, and to secure the readmission of the outcast into the rights and privileges of society from which he was legally excluded (2), or more probably lest he should be accused of interfering with the rights, or diminishing the dues of the priesthood, enjoined him to preserve the strictest secrecy concerning the cause of his cure; to submit to the regular examination of his case by the appointed authorities, and on no account to omit the customary offering. The second incident was remarkable for its publicity, as having taken place in a crowded house, in the midst of many of the scribes, who were, at this period at least, not friendly to Jesus (3). The door of the house being inaccessible on account of the crowd, the sick man was borne in his couch along the flat terrace roofs of

Conduct of Jesus with regard to his countrymen.

Healing the leper.

Second miracle.

(1) Matt. viii. 2—4.; Mark, i. 40—45; Luke, v. 12—16.

I have retained what may be called the moral connection of this cure with the Sermon on the Mount; if the latter is inserted, as in St. Luke, after the more solemn inauguration of the Twelve, this incident will retain, perhaps, its present place, but lose this moral connection. See Luke, v. 12—15.

(2) I am inclined to adopt the explanation of Grotius, that “the testimony” was to be obtained from the priest, before he knew that he had been healed by Jesus, lest, in his jealousy, he should declare the cure imperfect.

(3) Matt. ix. 2—8. Mark, ii. 1—12. Luke, v. 18—26.



the adjacent buildings (for in the East the roofs are rarely pointed or shelving) and let down through an aperture, which was easily made, and of sufficient dimensions to admit the bed, into the upper chamber (1), where Jesus was seated in the midst of his hearers. Jesus complied at once with their request to cure the afflicted man, but made use of a new and remarkable expression, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," which, while it coincided with the general notion that such diseases were the penalties of sin, nevertheless as assuming an unprecedented power, that which seems to belong to the Deity alone, struck his hearers, more especially the better instructed, the scribes, with astonishment. Their wonder, however, at the instantaneous cure, for the present, overpowered their indignation, yet no doubt the whole transaction tended to increase the jealousy with which Jesus began to be beheld.

The publicans.

The third incident (2) jarred on a still more sensitive chord in the popular feeling. On no point were all orders among the Jews so unanimous as in their contempt and detestation of the publicans. Strictly speaking the persons named in the evangelists were not publicans. These were men of property, not below the equestrian order, who farmed the public revenues. Those in question were the agents of these contractors, men, often freed slaves, or of low birth and station, and throughout the Roman world proverbial for their extortions, and in Judæa still more hateful, as among the manifest signs of subjugation to a foreign dominion. The Jew who exercised the function of a publican was, as it were, a traitor to the national independence. One of these, Matthew, otherwise called Levi, was summoned from his post as collector, perhaps at the port of Capernaum, to become one of the most intimate followers of Jesus; and the general astonishment was still farther increased by Jesus entering familiarly into the house, and even partaking of food with men thus proscribed by the universal feeling; and though not legally unclean, yet no doubt held in even greater abhorrence by the general sentiment of the people.

Close of first year of public life.

Thus ended the first year of the public life of Jesus. The fame of his wonderful works, the authority with which he delivered his doctrines, among the meeker and more peaceful spirits the beauty of the doctrines themselves; above all the mystery which hung over his character and pretensions, had strongly excited the interest of the whole nation. From all quarters, from Galilee, Peræa, Judæa, and even the remoter Idumea, multitudes approached him with eager curiosity. On the other hand, his total secession from, or rather his avowed condemnation of, the great prevailing party, the Pharisees, while his doctrines seemed equally opposed to the less numerous yet rival Sadducaic faction; his popular demeanour,

(1) Or they may merely have enlarged the floor of communication with the terrace roof.

(2) Matt. ix. 9.; Mark, ii. 13, 14.; Luke, v. 27, 28.

which had little in common with the ascetic mysticism of the Essenes; his independence of the ruling authorities; above all, notwithstanding his general deference for the law, his manifest assumption of a power above the law, had no doubt, if not actively arrayed against him, yet awakened to a secret and brooding animosity, the interests and the passions of the more powerful and influential throughout the country.

## CHAPTER V.

### SECOND YEAR OF THE PUBLIC LIFE OF JESUS.

THE second year of the public life of Christ opened, as the first, with his attendance at the passover (1). He appeared again amidst the assembled population of the whole race of Israel, in the place where, by common consent, the real Messiah was to assume his office, and to claim the allegiance of the favoured and chosen people of God (2). It is clear that a considerable change had taken place in the popular sentiment, on the whole, at least with the ruling party, unfavourable to Jesus of Nazareth. The inquisitive wonder, not unmingled with respect, which on the former occasion seemed to have watched his words and actions, had turned to an unquiet and jealous vigilance, and a manifest anxiety on the part of his opponents to catch some opportunity of weakening his influence over the people. The misapprehended speech concerning the demolition and restoration of the temple probably rankled in the recollection of many; and rumours no doubt, and those most likely inaccurate and misrepresented, must have reached Jerusalem, of the mysterious language in which he had spoken of his relation to the Supreme Being. The mere fact that Galilee had been chosen, rather than Jerusalem or Judæa, for his assumption of whatever distinguished character he was about to support, would work, with no doubtful or disguised animosity, among the proud and jealous inhabitants of the metropolis. Nor was his conduct, however still cautious, without further inevitable collision with some of the most inveterate prejudices of his countrymen. The first year the only public demonstration of his superiority had been the expulsion of the buyers

A. D. 28.

Passover.  
Jesus in  
Jerusalem.

Change  
in popular  
sentiment.

(1) My language on this point is to be taken with some latitude, as a certain time elapsed between the baptism of Jesus and the first passover.

I adopt the opinion that the feast, in the 5th chapter of St. John (verse 1.), was a passover. This view is not without objection, namely, the long interval of nearly a whole year, which would be overleaped at once by the narrative of

St. John. But if this Gospel was intended to be generally supplementary to the rest, or, as it seems, intended especially to relate the transactions in Jerusalem, omitted by the other Evangelists, this total silence on the intermediate events in Galilee would not be altogether unaccountable.

(2) John, v. 1—15.

and sellers from the temple, and his ambiguous and misinterpreted speech about that sacred edifice. His conversation with Nicodemus had probably not transpired, or at least not gained general publicity; for the same motives which would lead the cautious Pharisee to conceal his visit under the veil of night, would induce him to keep within his own bosom the important and startling truths, which perhaps he himself did not yet clearly comprehend, but which at all events were so opposite to the principles of his sect, and so humiliating to the pride of the ruling and learned oligarchy.

Breach  
of the  
Sabbath.  
Jewish  
reverence  
for the  
Sabbath.

During his second visit, however, at the same solemn period of national assemblage, Jesus gave a new cause of astonishment to his followers, of offence to his adversaries, by an act which could not but excite the highest wonder and the strongest animadversion. This was no less than an assumption of authority to dispense with the observance of the Sabbath. Of all their institutes, which after having infringed or neglected for centuries of cold and faithless service, the Jews, on the return from the captivity, embraced with passionate and fanatical attachment, none had become so completely identified with the popular feeling, or had been guarded by such minute and multifarious provisions as the Sabbath. In the early days of the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus, the insurgents, having been surprised on a Sabbath, submitted to be tamely butchered, rather than violate the sanctity of the day even by defensive warfare. And though the manifest impossibility of recovering or maintaining their liberties against the inroads of hostile nations had led to a relaxation of the law as far as self-defence, yet during the siege of Jerusalem by Pompey, the wondering Romans discovered, that although on the seventh day the garrison would repel an assault, yet they would do nothing to prevent or molest the enemy in carrying on his operations in the trenches. Tradition, "the hedge of the law," as it was called, had fenced this institution with more than usual care: it had noted with jealous rigour almost every act of bodily exertion within the capacity of man, arranged them under thirty-nine heads, which were each considered to comprehend a multitude of subordinate cases, and against each and every one of these had solemnly affixed the seal of Divine condemnation. A Sabbath day's journey was a distance limited to 2,000 cubits, or rather less than a mile; and the carrying any burthen was especially denounced as among the most flagrant violations of the law. This sabbatic observance was the strong-hold of pharisaic rigour; and enslaved as the whole nation was in voluntary bondage to these minute regulations, in no point were they less inclined to struggle with the yoke, or wore it with greater willingness and pride.

There was a pool (1), situated most likely to the north of the

(1) John, v. 1—15.



temple, near the sheep-gate, the same probably through which the animals intended for sacrifice were usually brought into the city. The place was called Beth-esda (the house of mercy), and the pool was supposed to possess remarkable properties for healing diseases. At certain periods there was a strong commotion in the waters, which probably bubbled up from some chemical cause connected with their medicinal effects. Popular belief, or rather perhaps popular language, attributed this agitation of the surface to the descent of an angel (1), for of course the regular descent of a celestial being, visible to the whole city, cannot for an instant be supposed. Around the pool were usually assembled a number of diseased persons, blind or paralytic, who awaited the right moment for plunging into the water, under the shelter of five porticoes, which had been built either by private charity, or at the public cost, for the general convenience. Among these lay one who had been notoriously afflicted for thirty-eight years by some disorder which deprived him of the use of his limbs (2). It was in vain that he had watched an opportunity of relief, for as the sick person who first plunged into the water, when it became agitated, seems to have exhausted its virtues, this helpless and friendless sufferer was constantly thrust aside, or supplanted by some more active rival for the salutary effects of the spring. Jesus saw and had compassion on the afflicted man, commanded him to rise, and, that he might show the perfect restoration of his strength, to take up the pallet on which he had lain, and to bear it away. The carrying any burthen, as has been said, was specifically named as one of the most heinous offences against the law; and the strange sight of a man thus openly violating the statute in so public a place, could not but excite the utmost attention. The man was summoned, it should seem, before the appointed authorities, and questioned about his offence against public decency and the established law. His defence was plain and simple; he acted according to the command of the wonderful person who had restored his limbs with a word, but who that person was he had no knowledge; for immediately after the miraculous cure Jesus, in conformity with his usual practice of avoiding whatever might lead to popular tumult, had quietly withdrawn from the wondering crowd. Subsequently, however, meeting Jesus in the temple, he recognised his benefactor, and it became generally known that Jesus was both the author of the cure and of the violation of the Sabbath. Jesus in his turn was called to account for his conduct.

Healing of  
the sick  
man at the  
pool of  
Bethesda.

(1) The verse relating to the angel is rejected as spurious by many critics, and is wanting in some manuscripts. Perhaps it was silently rejected from a reluctance to depart from the literal interpretation; and, at the same time, the inevitable conviction that if taken literally the fact must have been notorious and visible to all who

visited Jerusalem. Grotius, Lightfoot, Doddridge, in loc.

(2) We are not of course to suppose, as is assumed by some of the mythic interpreters, that the man had been all this time waiting for a cure at this place.

Judicial  
investiga-  
tion of the  
case.

Defence of  
Jesus.

The transaction bears the appearance, if not of a formal arraignment before the high court of the Sanhedrin, at least of a solemn and regular judicial inquiry. Yet as no verdict seems to have been given, notwithstanding the importance evidently attached to the affair, it may be supposed either that the full authority of the Sanhedrin was yet wanting, or that they dared not, on such insufficient evidence, condemn with severity one about whom the popular mind was at least divided. The defence of Jesus, though apparently not given at full length by the evangelist, was of a nature to startle and perplex the tribunal: it was full of mysterious intimations, and couched in language which it is difficult to decide how far it was familiar to the ears of the more learned. It appeared at once to strike at the literal interpretation of the Mosaic commandment, and at the same time to draw a parallel between the actions of Jesus and those of God (1). On the Sabbath the beneficent works of the Almighty Father are continued as on any other day; there is no period of rest to Him whose active power is continually employed in upholding, animating, maintaining in its uniform and interrupted course the universe which he has created. The free course of God's blessing knows no pause, no suspension (2). It is far from improbable that the healing waters of Bethesda occasionally showed their salutary virtues on the Sabbath, and might thus be an acknowledged instance of the unremitting benevolence of the Almighty. In the same manner the benevolence of Jesus disdained to be confined by any distinction of days; it was to flow forth as constant and unimpeded as the Divine bounty. The indignant court heard with astonishment this aggravation of the offence. Not only had Jesus assumed the power of dispensing with the law, but with what appeared to them profane and impious boldness, he had instituted a comparison between himself and the great ineffable Deity. With one consent they determine to press with greater vehemence the capital charge.

Second  
defence of  
Jesus.

The second defence of Jesus is at once more full and explicit, and more alarming to the awe-struck assembly. It amounted to an open assumption of the title and offices of the Messiah, the Messiah in the person of the commanding and fearless, yet still, as they supposed, humble Galilean, who stood before their tribunal. It commenced by expanding and confirming that parallel, which had already sunk so deep into their minds. The Son was upon earth, as it were, a representative of the power and mercy of the invisible Father, of that great Being who had never been comprehensible to

(1) John, v. 16—47.

(2) If the sublime maxim which was admitted in the school of Alexandria had likewise found its way into the synagogues of Judæa, the speech of Jesus (my Father worketh hitherto, and I work), in its first clause appealed to principles

acknowledged by his auditory. "God," says Philo, "never ceases from action, but as it is the property of fire to burn, of snow to chill, so to act (or to work), is the inalienable function of the Deity." *De Alleg. lib. ii.*

the senses of man. It proceeded to declare his divine mission and his claim to divine honour, his investment with power, not only over diseases but over death itself. From thence it passed to the acknowledged offices of the Messiah, the resurrection, the final judgment, the apportionment of everlasting life. All these recognised functions of the Messiah were assigned by the Father to the Son, and that Son appeared in his person. In confirmation of these as yet unheard of pretensions, Jesus declared that his right to honour and reverence rested not on his own assertion alone. He appealed to the testimony which had been publicly borne to his character by John the Baptist. The prophetic authority of John had been, if not universally, at least generally recognised; it had so completely sunk into the popular belief, that, as appears in a subsequent incident, the multitude would have resented any suspicion thrown even by their acknowledged superiors on one thus established in their respect and veneration, and perhaps further endeared by the persecution which he was now suffering under the unpopular tetrarch of Galilee. He appealed to a more decisive testimony, the public miracles which he had wrought, concerning which the rulers seem scarcely yet to have determined on their course, whether to doubt, to deny, or to ascribe them to dæmoniacal agency. Finally he appealed to the last unanswerable authority, the sacred writings, which they held in such devout reverence; and distinctly asserted that his coming had been prefigured by their great lawgiver, from the spirit at least, if not from the express letter of whose sacred laws they were departing, in rejecting his claims to the title and honours of the Messiah. There is an air of conscious superiority in the whole of this address, which occasionally rises to the vehemence of reproof, to solemn expostulation, to authoritative admonition, of which it is difficult to estimate the impression upon a court accustomed to issue their judgments to a trembling and humiliated auditory. But of their subsequent proceedings we have no information, whether the Sanhedrin hesitated or feared to proceed; whether they were divided in their opinions, or could not reckon upon the support of the people; whether they doubted their own competency to take so strong a measure without the concurrence or sanction of the Roman governor—at all events no attempt was made to secure the person of Jesus. He appears, with his usual caution, to have retired towards the safer province of Galilee, where the Jewish senate possessed no authority, and where Herod, much less under the pharisaic influence, would not think it necessary to support the injured dignity of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem; nor whatever his political apprehensions, would he entertain the same sensitive terrors of a reformer who confined his views to the religious improvement of mankind.

Difficult  
position of  
the San-  
hedrin.



Hostility  
of the  
pharisaic  
party.

They fol-  
low him  
into  
Galilee.

New viola-  
tion of the  
Sabbath.

But from this time commences the declared hostility of the pharisaic party against Jesus. Every opportunity is seized of detecting him in some further violation of the religious statutes. We now perpetually find the Pharisees watching his footsteps, and, especially on the Sabbath, laying hold of every pretext to inflame the popular mind against his neglect or open defiance of their observances. Nor was their jealous vigilance disappointed. Jesus calmly pursued on the Sabbath, as on every other day, his course of benevolence. A second and a third time, immediately after his public arraignment, that, which they considered the inextinguishable offence, was renewed, and justified in terms which were still more repugnant to their inveterate prejudices. The passover was scarcely ended, and with his disciples he was probably travelling homewards, when the first of these incidents occurred. On the first Sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread, the disciples passing through a field of corn, and being hungry, plucked some of the ears of corn, and rubbing them in their hands, eat the grain (1). This, according to Jewish usage, was no violation of the laws of property, as after the wave-offering had been made in the temple, the harvest was considered to be ripe : and the humane regulation of the lawgiver permitted the stranger, who was passing through a remote district, thus to satisfy his immediate wants. But it was the Sabbath, and the act directly offended against another of the multifarious provisions of pharisaic tradition. The vindication of his followers by their master took still higher ground : it not merely adduced the example of David, who in extreme want had not scrupled, in open violation of the law, to take the shewbread, which was prohibited to all but the priestly order, and thus placed his humble disciples on a level with the great king, whose memory was cherished with the most devout reverence and pride ; but distinctly asserted his own power of dispensing with that which was considered the eternal, the irreversible commandment,—he declared himself Lord of the Sabbath. Rumours of this dangerous innovation accompanied him into Galilee. Whether some of the more zealous Pharisees had followed him during his journey, or had accidentally returned at the same time from the passover, or whether by means of that intimate and rapid correspondence, likely to be maintained among the members of an ambitious and spreading sect, they had already communicated their apprehensions of danger and their animosity against Jesus, they already seem to have arrayed against him in all parts the vigilance and enmity of their brethren. It was in the public synagogue in some town which he entered on his return to Galilee, in the face of the whole assembly, that a man with a withered hand recovered the strength of his limb

(1) Matt. xii. 1—8.; Mark, ii. 23—28.; Luke, vi. 1—5.

at the commandment of Jesus on the Sabbath day (1). And the multitude, instead of being inflamed by the zeal of the Pharisees, appear at least to have been unmoved by their angry remonstrances. They heard without disapprobation, if they did not openly testify their admiration, both of the power and goodness of Jesus; and listened to the simple argument with which he silenced his adversaries, by appealing to their own practice in extricating their own property, or delivering their own cattle from jeopardy, on the sacred day (2).

The discomfited Pharisees endeavoured to enlist in their party the followers, perhaps the magistracy of Herod, and to organise a formidable opposition to the growing influence of Jesus. So successful was their hostility, that Jesus seems to have thought it prudent to withdraw for a short time from the collision. He passed towards the lake, over which he could at any time cross into the district which was beyond the authority both of Herod and of the Jewish Sanhedrin (3). A bark attended upon him, which might transport him to any quarter he might desire, and on board of which he seems to have avoided the multitudes, which constantly thronged around, or seated on the deck addressed, with greater convenience, the crowding hearers who lined the shores. Yet concealment, or at least less frequent publicity, seems now to have been his object (4), for when some of those insane persons, the *dæmoniacs* as they were called, openly address him by the title of Son of God, Jesus enjoins their silence (5), as though he were yet unwilling openly to assume this title, which was fully equivalent to that of the Messiah; and which, no doubt, was already ascribed to him by the bolder and less prudent of his followers. The same injunctions of secrecy were addressed to others, who at this time were relieved or cured by his beneficent power; so that one evangelist considers that the cautious and unresisting demeanour of Jesus, thus avoiding all unnecessary offence or irritation, exemplified that characteristic of the Messiah, so beautifully described by Isaiah (6), “He shall neither strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.”

This persecution, however, continues but a short time, and Jesus appears again openly in Capernaum and its neighbourhood. After a night passed in solitary retirement, he takes the decided step of organising his followers, selecting and solemnly inaugurating a certain number of his more immediate disciples, who were to receive an authoritative commission to disseminate his doctrines (7).

Jesus withdraws beyond the sea of Galilee.

Jesus retires from public view.

Re-appears at Capernaum.

Organisation of his followers

(1) Mat. xii. 9—14.; Mark, iii. 1—6.; Luke. vi. 6—11.

(2) Matt. xii. 15. 21.; Mark, iii. 7—12.

(3) Mark, iii. 7.

(4) Matt. xii. 16.

(5) Mark, iii. 11—12.

(6) Matt. xii. 19, 20.

(7) Mark, iii. 13—19.; Luke, vi. 12—19.

The  
twelve  
apostles.

Hitherto he had stood, as it were, alone : though doubtless some of his followers had attended upon him with greater zeal and assiduity than others, yet he could scarcely be considered as the head of a regular and disciplined community. The twelve apostles, whether selected with that view, could not but call to mind the number of the tribes of Israel. Of the earlier lives of these humble men little can be gathered beyond the usual avocations of some among them ; and even tradition, for once, preserves a modest and almost total silence. They were of the lower, though perhaps not quite the lowest, class of Galilean peasants. What previous education they had received we can scarcely conjecture ; though almost all the Jews appear to have received some kind of instruction in the history, the religion, and the traditions of the nation. First among the twelve appears Simon, to whom Jesus, in allusion to the firmness of character which he was hereafter to exhibit, gave a name, or rather, perhaps, interpreted a name by which he was already known, Cephas (1), the Rock ; and declared that his new religious community was to rest on a foundation as solid as that name seemed to signify. Andrew his brother is usually associated with Peter. James and John (2) received the remarkable name of Boanerges, the Sons of Thunder, of which it is not easy to trace the exact force ; for those who bore it do not appear remarkable among their brethren, either for energy or vehemence : the peculiar gentleness of the latter, both in character and in the style of his writings, would lead us to doubt the correctness of the interpretation generally assigned to the appellation. The two former were natives of one town, Bethsaida, the latter, either of Bethsaida or Capernaum, and obtained their livelihood as fishermen on the lake of Gennesareth, the waters of which were extraordinarily prolific in fish of many kinds. Matthew or Levi, as it has been said, was a publican. Philip was likewise of Bethsaida ; Bartholomew, the son of Tolmai or Ptolemy, is generally considered to have been the same with Nathaniel, and was distinguished, before his knowledge of Jesus, by the blamelessness of his character, and, from the respect in which he was held, may be supposed to have been of higher reputation as of a better instructed class. Thomas or Didymus, (for the Syriac and Greek words have the same signification,) a twin, is remarkable in the subsequent history for his coolness and reflecting temper of mind. Lebbeus, or Thaddeus, or Judas, the brother of James, are doubtless the same persons ; Judas in Syriac is Thaddai. Whether

(1) The equivocal meaning of the word was, no doubt, evident in the original Aramaic dialect, spoken in Galilee. The French alone, of modern languages, exactly retains it. " Vous êtes Pierre, et sur cette pierre." The narrative of St. John ascribes the giving this appellative to an earlier period. See *supra*, p. 85.

(2) John must have been extremely young when chosen as an apostle, there is so constant

a tradition of his being alive at a late period in the first century, that the fact can scarcely be doubted. Jerome may perhaps have overstrained the tradition " ut autem sciamus Johannem tum fuisse puerum, cum a Jesu electus est, manifestissime docent ecclesiasticæ historia, quod usque ad Trajani vixerit imperium." Hieronym. in Journ. i. 1.



Lebbaïos is derived from the town of Lebba, on the sea-coast of Galilee, or from a word denoting the heart, and therefore almost synonymous with Thaddai, which is interpreted the breast, is extremely doubtful. James, the son of Cleophas or Alpheus, concerning whom and his relationship to Jesus there has been much dispute. His father Cleophas was married to another Mary, sister of Mary the mother of Jesus, to whom he would therefore be cousin-German. But whether he is the same with the James, who in other places is named the brother of the Lord, the term of brother by Jewish usage, according to one opinion, comprehending these closer ties of kindred; and whether either of these two, or which, was the James who presided over the Christian community in Jerusalem, and whose cruel death is described by Josephus, must remain among those questions on which we can scarcely expect further information, and cannot therefore decide with certainty. Simon the Canaanite was so called, not, as has been supposed, from the town of Cana, still less from his Canaanitish descent, but from a Hebrew word meaning a zealot, to which fanatical and dangerous body this apostle had probably belonged, before he joined the more peaceful disciples of Jesus. The last was Judas Iscariot, perhaps so named from a small village named Iscara, or more probably Carioth, a town in the tribe of Judah.

It was after the regular inauguration of the twelve in their apostolic office, that, according to St. Luke, the Sermon on the Mount was delivered, or some second outline of Christian morals repeated in nearly similar terms. Immediately after, as Jesus returned to Capernaum, a cure was wrought, both from its circumstances and its probable influence on the situation of Jesus, highly worthy of remark (1). It was in favour of a centurion, a military officer of Galilean descent, probably in the service of Herod, and a proselyte to Judaism, for he could scarcely have built a synagogue for Jewish worship, unless a convert to the religion. (2). This man was held in such high estimation that the Jewish elders of the city, likewise it should seem not unfavourably disposed towards Jesus, interceded in his behalf. The man himself appears to have held the new teacher in such profound reverence, that in his humility he did not think his house worthy of so illustrious a guest, and expressed his confidence that a word from him would be as effective, even uttered at a distance, as the orders that he was accustomed to issue to his soldiery. Jesus not only complied with his request by restoring his servant to health, but took the opportunity of declaring that many Gentiles, from the most remote quarters, would be admitted within the pale of the new religion, to the exclusion of many who had no

Healing  
of the  
centu-  
rion's ser-  
vant.

(1) St. Matthew as well as St. Luke places this cure as immediately following the Sermon on the Mount.

(2) Matt. viii. 5—13; Luke, vii. 1—10.

title but their descent from Abraham. Still there was nothing, at least in the earlier part of this declaration, directly contrary to the established opinions; for at least the more liberal Jews were not unwilling to entertain the splendid ambition of becoming the religious instructors of the world, provided the world did homage to the excellence and divine institution of the Law; and at all times the Gentiles, by becoming Jews, either as proselytes of the gate, if not proselytes by circumcision, might share in most, if not in all, the privileges of the chosen people. This incident was likewise of importance as still further strengthening the interest of Jesus with the ruling authorities and with another powerful officer in the town of Capernaum. A more extraordinary transaction followed. As yet Jesus had claimed authority over the most distressing and obstinate maladies, he now appeared invested with power over death itself. As he entered the town of Nain, between twenty and thirty miles from Capernaum, he met a funeral procession, accompanied with circumstances of extreme distress. It was a youth, the only son of a widow, who was borne out to burial; so great was the calamity that it had excited the general interest of the inhabitants. Jesus raises the youth from his bier, and restores him to the destitute mother (1).

Raising  
the wi-  
dow's son.

The fame of this unprecedented miracle was propagated with the utmost rapidity through the country; and still vague, yet deepening, rumours that a prophet had appeared; that the great event which held the whole nation in suspense was on the instant of fulfilment, spread throughout the whole province. It even reached the remote fortress of Machærus, in which John was still closely guarded, though it seems the free access of his followers was not prohibited (2). John commissioned two of his disciples to inquire into the truth of these wonderful reports, and to demand of Jesus himself, whether he was the expected Messiah. But what was the design of John in this message to Jesus? The question is not without difficulty. Was it for the satisfaction of his own doubts, or those of his followers (3)? Was it that, in apprehension of his approaching death, he would consign his disciples to the care of a still greater instructor? Was it that he might attach them before his death to Jesus, and familiarise them with conduct, in some respects, so opposite to his own Essenian, if not Pharisaic, habits? He might foresee the advantage that would be taken by the more ascetic to alienate his followers from Jesus, as a teacher who fell far below the austerity of their own; and who, accessible to all, held in no respect those minute observances which the usage of the stricter Jews, and the example of their master, had arrayed in indispensable sanctity. Or was it that John himself, having languished for nearly a year in his remote prison, began to be impatient for the

Message of  
John the  
Baptist.

(1) Luke, vii. 14—18.

(2) Matt. xi. 2, 30.; Luke, vii. 17—35.

(3) Whithy, Doddridge, in loc.

commencement of that splendid epoch (1), of which the whole nation, even the apostles of Jesus, both before and after the resurrection, had by no means abandoned their glorious, worldly, and Jewish notions? Was John, like the rest of the people, not yet exalted above those hopes which were inseparable from the national mind? If he is the king, why does he hesitate to assume his kingdom? If the Deliverer, why so tardy to commence the deliverance? "If thou art indeed the Messiah (such may appear to have been the purport of the Baptist's message), proclaim thyself at once; assume thy state; array thyself in majesty; discomfit the enemies of holiness and of God! My prison doors will at once burst open; my trembling persecutors will cease from their oppressions. Herod himself will yield up his usurped authority; and even the power of Rome will cease to afflict the redeemed people of the Almighty?" What, on the other hand, is the answer of Jesus? It harmonises in a remarkable manner with this latter view. It declares at once, and to the disappointment of these temporal hopes, the purely moral and religious nature of the dominion to be established by the Messiah. He was found displaying manifest signs of more than human power, and to these peaceful signs he appeals as the conclusive evidence of the commencement of the Messiah's kingdom, the relief of diseases, the cessation of sorrows, the restoration of their lost or decayed senses to the deaf or blind, the equal admission of the lowest orders to the same religious privileges with those more especially favoured by God. The remarkable words are added, "Blessed is he that shall not be offended in me;" he that shall not consider irreconcilable with the splendid promises of the Messiah's kingdom, my lowly condition, my calm and unassuming course of mercy and love to mankind, my total disregard of worldly honours, my refusal to place myself at the head of the people as a temporal ruler. Violent men, more especially during the disturbed and excited period since the appearance of John the Baptist, would urge on a kingdom of violence. How truly the character of the times is thus described, is apparent from the single fact, that shortly afterwards the people would have seized Jesus himself and forced him to assume the royal title, if he had not withdrawn himself from his dangerous adherents. This last expression, however, occurs in the subsequent discourse of Jesus, after his disciples had departed, when in those striking images he spoke of the former concourse of the people to the Baptist, and justified it by the assertion of his prophetic character. It was no idle object which led them into the wilderness, to see, as it were, "a reed shaken by the wind;" nor to behold any rich or luxurious object—for such they would have gone to the courts of their sovereigns. Still he declares the meanest of his own disciples

(1) Hammond inclines to this view, as does Jortin; Discourses on the Truth of the Christian Religion.



to have attained some moral superiority, some knowledge, probably, of the real nature of the new religion, and the character and designs of the Messiah, which had never been possessed by John. With his usual rapidity of transition, Jesus passes at once to his moral instruction, and vividly shows, that whether severe or gentle, whether more ascetic or more popular, the teachers of a holier faith had been equally unacceptable. The general multitude of the Jews had rejected both the austerer Baptist, and himself though of so much more benign and engaging demeanour. The whole discourse ends with the significant words, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Contrast  
between  
Jesus and  
John the  
Baptist.

Nothing, indeed, could offer a more striking contrast to the secluded and eremitical life of John, than the easy and accessible manner with which Jesus mingled with all classes, even with his bitterest opponents, the Pharisees. He accepts the invitation of one of these, and enters into his house to partake of refreshment (1). Here a woman of dissolute life found her way into the chamber where the feast was held; she sat at his feet, anointing him, according to Eastern usage, with a costly unguent, which was contained in a box of alabaster; she wept bitterly, and with her long locks wiped away the falling tears. The Pharisees, who shrunk not only from the contact, but even from the approach, of all whom they considered physically or morally unclean, could only attribute the conduct of Jesus to his ignorance of her real character. The reply of Jesus intimates that his religion was intended to reform and purify the worst, and that some of his most sincere and ardent believers might proceed from those very outcasts of society from whom pharisaic rigour shrunk with abhorrence.

After this Jesus appears to have made another circuit through the towns and villages of Galilee. On his return to Capernaum, instigated, perhaps, by his adversaries, some of his relatives appear to have believed, or pretended to believe, that he was out of his senses; and, therefore, attempted to secure his person. This scheme failing, the pharisaic party, who had been deputed, it should seem, from Jerusalem to watch his conduct, endeavour to avail themselves of that great principle of Jewish superstition, the belief in the power of evil spirits, to invalidate his growing authority (2). On the occasion of the cure of one of those lunatics, usually called *dæmoni*acs (3), who

(1) Luke, vii. 36—50. Luke, xi. 14—26.

(2) Matt. xii. 22—45.; Mark, iii. 19—30.

(3) I have no scruple in avowing my opinion on the subject of the *dæmoni*acs to be that of Joseph Mede, Lardner, Dr. Mead, Paley, and all the learned modern writers. It was a kind of insanity, not unlikely to be prevalent among a people peculiarly subject to leprosy and other cutaneous diseases; and nothing was more probable than that lunacy should take the turn and speak the language of the prevailing superstition of the times. As the belief in witchcraft made

people fancy themselves witches, so the belief in possession made men of distempered minds fancy themselves possessed. The present case, indeed, seems to have been one rather of infirmity than lunacy: the afflicted person was blind and dumb; but such cases were equally ascribed to malignant spirits. There is one very strong reason, which I do not remember to have seen urged with sufficient force, but which may have contributed to induce Jesus to adopt the current language on this point. The disbelief in these spiritual influences was one of the characteristic

was both dumb and blind, they accused him of unlawful dealings with the spirits of evil. It was by a magic influence obtained by a secret contract with Beelzebub, the chief of the powers of darkness, or by secretly invoking his all-powerful name, that he reduced the subordinate dæmons to obedience. The answer of Jesus struck them with confusion. Evil spirits, according to their own creed, took delight in the miseries and crimes of men; his acts were those of the purest benevolence: how gross the inconsistency to suppose that malignant spirits would thus lend themselves to the cause of human happiness and virtue. Another more personal argument still farther confounded his adversaries. The Pharisees were professed exorcists (1); if, then, exorcism, or the ejection of these evil spirits, necessarily implied unlawful dealings with the world of darkness, they were as open to the charge as he whom they accused. They had, therefore, the alternative of renouncing their own pretensions, or of admitting that those of Jesus were to be judged on other principles. It was, then, blasphemy against the spirit of God to ascribe acts which bore the manifest impress of the divine goodness in their essentially beneficent character, to any other source but the Father of Mercies; it was an offence which argued such total obtuseness of moral perception, such utter incapacity of feeling or comprehending the beauty either of the conduct or the doctrines of Jesus, as to leave no hope that they would ever be reclaimed from their rancorous hostility to his religion, or be qualified for admission into the pale and to the benefits of the new faith.

Dæmo-  
nias.

The discomfited pharisees now demand a more public and undeniable sign of his Messiahship (2), which alone could justify the lofty tone assumed by Jesus. A second time Jesus obscurely alludes to the one great future sign of the new faith—his resurrection; and, refusing further to gratify their curiosity, he reverts, in language of more than usual energy, to the incapacity of the age and nation to discern the real and intrinsic superiority of his religion.

Pharisees  
demand a  
sign.

The followers of Jesus had now been organised into a regular sect or party. Another incident distinctly showed that he no longer

tenets of the unpopular sect of the sadducees. A departure from the common language, or the endeavour to correct this inveterate error, would have raised an immediate outcry against him from his watchful and malignant adversaries, as an unbelieving sadducee. Josephus mentions a certain herb which had the power of expelling dæmons, a fact which intimates that it was a bodily disease. Kuinoël, in Matt. iv. 24., refers to the latter fact, shows that in Greek authors, especially Hippocrates, madness and dæmoniacal possession are the same; and quotes the various passages in the New Testament where the same language is evidently held; as, among many others, John, x. 20.; Matt. xvii. 15.; Mark, v. 15. I have again the satisfaction of finding myself to have arrived at the same conclusion as Neander.

(1) The rebuking subordinate dæmons, by the invocation of a more powerful name, is a very

ancient and common form of superstition. The later anti-Christian writers among the Jews attribute the power of Jesus over evil spirits to his having obtained the secret, and dared to utter the ineffable name, "the Sem-ham-phorash." To this name wonderful powers over the whole invisible world are attributed by the Jewish Alexandrian writers, Artapanus and Ezekiel, the tragedian; and it is not impossible that the more superstitious pharisees may have hoped to reduce Jesus to the dilemma either of confessing that he invoked the name of the prince of the dæmons, or secretly uttered that, which it was still more criminal to make use of for such a purpose, the mysterious and unspeakable Tetragrammaton. See Eisenmeuger, i. 154. According to Josephus the art of exorcism descended from king Solomon. Antiq. viii. 2.

(2) Matt. xii. 38—45.

Conduct  
of Jesus to  
his rela-  
tives.

Parables.

Rebukes  
the storm.

Destruc-  
tion of the  
swine.

stood alone; even the social duties, which up to this time he had, no doubt, discharged with the utmost affection, were to give place to the sublimer objects of his mission. While he sat encircled by the multitude of his disciples, tidings were brought that his mother and his brethren desired to approach him (1). But Jesus refused to break off his occupation; he declared himself connected by a closer tie even than that of blood, with the great moral family of which he was to be the parent, and with which he was to stand in the most intimate relation. He was the chief of a fraternity not connected by common descent or consanguinity, but by a purely moral and religious bond; not by any national or local union, but bound together by the one strong but indivisible link of their common faith. On the increase, the future prospects, the final destiny of this community, his discourses now dwell, with frequent but obscure allusions (2). His language more constantly assumes the form of parable. Nor was this merely in compliance with the genius of an Eastern people, in order to convey his instruction in a form more attractive, and therefore both more immediately and more permanently impressive; or by awakening the imagination, to stamp his doctrines more deeply on the memory, and to incorporate them with the feelings. These short and lively apologues were admirably adapted to suggest the first rudiments of truths which it was not expedient openly to announce. Though some of the parables have a purely moral purport, the greater part delivered at this period bear a more or less covert relation to the character and growth of the new religion; a subject which, avowed without disguise, would have revolted the popular mind, and clashed too directly with their inveterate nationality. Yet these splendid, though obscure, anticipations singularly contrast with occasional allusions to his own personal destitution, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head (3)". For with the growth and organisation of his followers he seems fully aware that his dangers increase; he now frequently changes his place, passes from one side of the lake to the other, and even endeavours to throw a temporary concealment over some of his most extraordinary miracles. During one of these expeditions across the lake, he is in danger from one of those sudden and violent tempests which often disturb inland seas, particularly in mountainous districts. He rebukes the storm and it ceases. On the other side of the lake, in the district of Gadara, occurs the remarkable scene of the dæmoniacks among the tombs, and the herd of swine; the only act in the whole life of Jesus in the least repugnant to the uniform gentleness of his disposition, which would shrink from the unneces-

(1) Matt. xii. 46—49.; Mark, iii. 31—35.

(3) Matt. viii. 18—27.; Mark, iv. 35—41.;

(2) Matt. xiii.; Mark, iv. 1—34.; Luke, viii. Luke, viii. 22—25.



sary destruction even of the meanest and most loathsome animals (1). On his return from this expedition to Capernaum took place the healing of the woman with the issue of the blood, and the raising of Jairus's daughter (2). Concerning the latter, as likewise concerning the relief of two blind men (3), he gives the strongest injunctions of secrecy, which, nevertheless, the active zeal of his partisans seems by no means to have regarded.

But a more decisive step was now taken than the organisation of the new religious community. The twelve apostles were sent out to disseminate the doctrines of Jesus throughout the whole of Galilee (4). They were invested with the power of healing diseases ; with cautious deference to Jewish feeling, they were forbidden to proceed beyond the borders of the Holy Land, either among the Gentiles or the heretical Samaritans ; they were to depend on the hospitality of those whom they might address for their subsistence ; and he distinctly anticipates the enmity which they would perpetually encounter, and the dissension which would be caused, even in the bosom of families, by the appearance of men thus acting on a commission unprecedented and unrecognised by the religious authorities of the nation, yet whose doctrines were of such intrinsic beauty, and so full of exciting promise.

The apostles sent out.

It was most likely this open proclamation, as it were, of the rise of a new and organised community ; and the greater publicity which this simultaneous appearance of two of its delegates in the different towns of Galilee could not but give to the growing influence of Jesus, that first attracted the notice of the government. Up to this period Jesus, as a remarkable individual, must have been well known by general report ; by this measure he stood in a very different character, as the chief of a numerous fraternity. There were other reasons, at this critical period, to excite the apprehensions and jealousy of Herod. During the short interval between the visit of John's disciples to Jesus and the present time, the Tetrarch had at length, at the instigation of his wife, perpetrated the murder of the Baptist. Whether his reluctance to shed unnecessary blood, or his prudence, had as yet shrunk from this crime, the condemnation of her marriage could not but rankle in the heart of the wife. The desire of revenge would be strengthened by a feeling of insecurity, and an apprehension of the precariousness of an union, declared, on such revered authority, null and void. As long as this stern and respected censor lived, her influence over her husband, the bond of marriage itself, might, in an hour of passion or remorse, be dissol-

Conduct of Herod.

Death of John the Baptist.

(1) The moral difficulty of this transaction has always appeared to me greater than that of reconciling it with the more rational view of daemoniacism. Both are much diminished, if not entirely removed, by the theory of Kuinoel, who attributes to the lunatics the whole of the conversation with Jesus, and supposes that their

driving the herd of swine down the precipice was the last paroxysm in which their insanity exhausted itself. Matt. viii. 28—34.; Mark, v. 1—20.; Luke, viii. 26—39.

(2) Luke, viii. 40—56.

(3) Matt. xx. 27—31.

(4) Matt. x.; Mark, vi. 7—13.; Luke, ix. 1—6.

ved. The common crime would cement still closer, perhaps for ever, their common interests. The artifices of Herodias, who did not scruple to make use of the beauty and grace of her daughter to compass her end, had extorted from the reluctant king, in the hour of festive carelessness—the celebration of Herod's birthday—the royal promise, which, whether for good or for evil, was equally irrevocable (1). The head of John the Baptist was the reward for the dancing of the daughter of Herodias (2). Whether the mind of Herod, like that of his father (3), was disordered by his crime, and the disgrace and discomfiture of his arms contributed to his moody terrors; or whether some popular rumour of the re-appearance of John, and that Jesus was the murdered prophet restored to life, had obtained currency; indications of hostility from the government seem to have put Jesus upon his guard (4). For no sooner had he been rejoined by the Apostles, than he withdrew into the desert country about Bethsaida, with the prudence which he now thought fit to assume, avoiding any sudden collision with the desperation or the capricious violence of the Tetrarch.

Jesus with-  
draws  
from Ga-  
lilee.

The multi-  
tudes fed  
in the de-  
sert.

But he now filled too important a place in the public mind to remain concealed so near his customary residence, and the scene of his extraordinary actions. The multitude thronged forth to trace his footsteps, so that five thousand persons had pre-occupied the place of his retreat; and so completely were they possessed by profound religious enthusiasm, as entirely to have forgotten the difficulty of obtaining provisions in that desolate region. The manner in which their wants were preternaturally supplied, and the whole assemblage fed by five loaves and two small fishes, wound up at once the rising enthusiasm to the highest pitch. It could not but call to the mind of the multitude the memorable event in their annals, the feeding the whole nation in the desert by the multiplication of the manna (5). Jesus then would no longer confine himself to those private and more unimposing acts of beneficence, of which the actual advantage was limited to a single object, and the ocular evidence of the fact to but few witnesses. Here was a sign performed in the presence of many thousands, who had actually participated in the miraculous food. This then, they supposed, could not but be the long-desired commencement of his more public, more national, career. Behold a second Moses! behold a Leader of the people, under whom they could never be afflicted with want! behold at length the Prophet, under whose government the people

(1) Matt. xiv. 1—12.; Mark, vi. 14—29; Luke, ix. 7—9.

(2) Josephus places the scene of this event in Machærus. Macknight would remove the prison of John to Tiberias. But the circumstances of the war may have caused the court to be held in this strong frontier town, and the feast may have been intended chiefly for the army, the "Chiliarchs" of St. Mark.

(3) According to Josephus the Jews ascribed the discomfiture of Herod's army by Aretas, king of Arabia, to the wrath of Heaven for the murder of John.

(4) Matt. xiv. 13, 14.; Mark, vi. 30—34.; Luke, ix. 10, 11.; John, vi. 1, 2.

(5) Matt. xiv. 15—23; Mark, vi. 35—45.; Luke, ix. 12—17.; John, vi. 3—14.

were to enjoy, among the other blessings of the Messiah's reign, unexampled, uninterrupted plenty (1).

Their acclamations clearly betrayed their intentions ; they would brook no longer delay ; they would force him to assume the royal title ; they would proclaim him, whether consenting or not, the king of Israel (2). Jesus withdrew from the midst of the dangerous tumult, and till the next day they sought him in vain. On their return to Capernaum, they found that he had crossed the lake, and entered the city the evening before. Their suspense, no doubt, had not been allayed by his mysterious disappearance on the other side of the lake. The circumstances under which he had passed over (3), if communicated by the Apostles to the wondering multitude ( and unless positively prohibited by their master, they could not have kept silence on so wonderful an occurrence ) would inflame still farther the intense popular agitation. While the Apostles were passing the lake in their boat, Jesus had appeared by their side, walking upon the waters.

Enthusiasm of the people.

When therefore Jesus entered the synagogue of Capernaum, no doubt the crisis was immediately expected : at length he will avow himself ; the declaration of his dignity must now be made ; and where with such propriety as in the place of the public worship, in the midst of the devout and adoring people (4). The calm, the purely religious language of Jesus was a death-blow to these high-strung hopes. The object of his mission, he declared in explicit terms, was not to confer temporal benefits ; they were not to follow him with the hope that they would obtain without labour the fruits of the earth, or be secured against thirst and hunger—these were mere casual and incidental blessings (5). The real design of the new religion was the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition of man, described under the strong but not unusual figure of nourishment administered to the soul. During the whole of his address, or rather his conversation with the different parties, the popular opinion was in a state of fluctuation ; or, as is probable, there were two distinct parties, that of the populace, at first more favourable to Jesus ; and that of the Jewish leaders, who were altogether hostile. The former appear more humbly to have inquired what was demanded by the new Teacher in order to please God : of them

Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum.

(1) He made manna to descend for them, in which were all manner of tastes ; and every Israelite found in it what his palate was chiefly pleased with. If he desired fat in it, he had it. In it the young men tasted bread ; the old men, honey ; and the children, oil. So it shall be in the world to come (the days of the Messias) ; he shall give Israel peace, and they shall sit down and eat in the garden of Eden ; all nations shall behold their condition ; as it is said, " Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry." Isaiah, lrv. Ramban in Sanhed. cap. 10.

Maury affirm that the hope of Israel is, that

Messiah shall come and raise the dead ; and they shall be gathered together in the garden of Eden, and shall eat and drink, and satiate themselves all the days of the world... ; and that there are houses built all of precious stones, beds of silk, and rivers flowing with wine and spicy oil. Shemoth Rabba, sect. 25 ; Lightfoot in loc. vol. xii. 292.

(2) John, vi. 15.

(3) Matt. xiv. 24—33 ; Mark, vi. 47—53 ; John, vi. 16—21.

(4) John, vi. 22—71.

(5) Ibid. 26—29.



Jesus required faith in the Messiah. The latter first demanded a new sign (1), but broke out into murmurs of disapprobation when "the carpenter's son" began in his mysterious language to speak of his descent, his commission, from his Father, his re-ascension to his former intimate communion with the Deity; still more when he seemed to confine the hope of everlasting life to those only who were fitted to receive it; to those whose souls would receive the inward nutriment of his doctrines. No word in the whole address fell in with their excited, their passionate hopes: however dark, however ambiguous his allusions, they could not warp or misinterpret them into the confirmation of their splendid views. Not only did they appear to discountenance the immediate, they gave no warrant to the remote, accomplishment of their visions of the Messiah's earthly power and glory (2). At all events the disappointment was universal; his own adherents, baffled and sinking at once from their exalted hopes, cast off their unambitious, their inexplicable Leader; and so complete appears to have been the desertion, that Jesus demanded of the Twelve, whether they too would abandon his cause, and leave him to his fate. In the name of the Apostles Peter replied, that they had still full confidence in his doctrines, as teaching the way to eternal life; they still believed him to be the promised Messiah, the son of God. Jesus received this protestation of fidelity with apparent approbation, but intimated that the time would come, when one even of the tried and chosen Twelve would prove a traitor (3).

Thus the public life of Jesus closed its second year. On one side endangered by the zeal of the violent, on the other enfeebled by the desertion of so many of his followers, Jesus, so long as he spoke the current language about the Messiah, might be instantly taken

(1) John, vi. 30.

(2) There is some difficulty in placing the conversation with the Pharisees, (Matt. xv. 1—20.; Mark, vii. 1—23.), whether before or after the retreat of Jesus to the more remote district. The incident, though characteristic, is not of great importance, and seems rather to have been a private inquiry of certain members of the sect, than the public appeal of persons deputed for that purpose.

(3) The wavering and uncertainty of the Apostles, and still more of the people, concerning the Messiahship of Jesus is urged by Strauss as an argument for the later invention and inconsistency of the Gospels. It has always appeared to me one of those marks of true nature and of inartificial composition, which would lead me to a conclusion directly opposite. The first intimation of the deference and homage shown to him by John at his baptism, grows at once into a welcome rumour that the Christ has appeared. Andrew imparts the joyful tidings to his brother. "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ;" so Philip, verse 46. But though Jesus, in one part of the Sermon on the Mount speaks of himself as the future judge, in general his distinct assumption of that character is exclusively to individuals in pri-

vate, to the Samaritan woman (John, iv. 26—42), and in more ambiguous language, perhaps, in his private examination before the authorities in Jerusalem (John, v. 46.). Still the manner in which he assumed the title, and asserted his claims, was so totally opposite to Jewish expectation; he appeared to delay so long the open declaration of his Messiahship, that the populace constantly fluctuated in their opinion, now ready by force to make him a king (John, vi. 15.), immediately after this altogether deserting him, so that even the Apostles' faith is severely tried. (Compare with John, vi. 69., Luke, ix. 20., Matt. xvi. 16., Mark, viii. 29., where it appears that rumours had become prevalent that though not the Messiah, he was either a prophet or a forerunner of the Messiah.) The real test of the fidelity of the Apostles was their adherence, under all the fluctuation of popular opinion, to this conviction, which at last, however, was shaken by that which most completely clashed with their pre-conceived notions of the Messiah, his ignominious death, and undisturbed burial.

As a corrective to Strauss on this point, I would recommend the work of one who will not be suspected of loose and inaccurate reasoning—Locke on the Reasonableness of Christianity.

at his word; and against his will be set at the head of a daring insurrection; immediately that he departed from it, and rose to the sublimer tone of a purely religious teacher, he excited the most violent animosity even among many of his most ardent adherents. Thus his influence at one moment was apparently most extensive, at the next was confined to but a small circle. Still however it held the general mind in unallayed suspense; and the ardent admiration, the attachment of the few, who were enabled to appreciate his character, and the animosity of the many, who trembled at his progress, bore testimony to the commanding character and the surprising works of Jesus of Nazareth.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THIRD YEAR OF THE PUBLIC LIFE OF JESUS.

THE third Passover had now arrived since Jesus of Nazareth had appeared as a public Teacher, but, as it should seem, “his appointed hour” was not yet come; and, instead of descending with the general concourse of the whole nation to the capital, he remains in Galilee, or rather retires to the remotest extremity of the country; and though he approaches nearer to the northern shore of the lake, never ventures down into the populous region in which he more usually fixed his residence. The avowed hostility of the Jews, and their determination to put him to death; the apparently growing jealousy of Herod, and the desertion of his cause, on one hand, by a great number of his Galilean followers, who had taken offence at his speech in the synagogue of Capernaum, with the rash and intemperate zeal of others who were prepared to force him to assume the royal title, would render his presence at Jerusalem, if not absolutely necessary for his designs, both dangerous and inexpedient (1). But his absence from this Passover is still more remarkable, if, as appears highly probable, it was at this feast that the event occurred which is alluded to in St. Luke (2) as of general notoriety, and at a later period, was the subject of a conversation between Jesus and his disciples, the slaughter of certain Galileans in the Temple of Jerusalem by the Roman governor (3). The reasons for assigning this fact to the period of the third Passover appear to have considerable weight. Though at all times of the year the Temple was open, not merely for the regular morning and

Passover.

Massacre  
of the Ga-  
lileans at  
the Pass-  
over.

(1) The commencement of the 7th chapter of St. John's Gospel, appears to me to contain a manifest reference to his absence from this pass-over.

(2) John, vii. 1.

(3) Luke, xiii. 1.

evening offerings, but likewise for the private sacrifices of more devout worshippers, such an event as this massacre was not likely to have occurred, even if Pilate was present at Jerusalem at other times, unless the metropolis had been crowded with strangers, at least in numbers sufficient to excite some apprehension of dangerous tumult; for Pontius Pilate, though prodigal of blood, if the occasion seemed to demand the vigorous exercise of power, does not appear to have been wantonly sanguinary. It is, therefore, most probable, that the massacre took place during some public festival; and if so, it must have been either at the Passover or Pentecost, as Jesus was present at both the later feasts of the present year, those of Tabernacles and of the Dedication: nor does the slightest intimation occur of any disturbance of that nature at either (1). Who these Galileans were, whether they had been guilty of turbulent and seditious conduct, or were the innocent victims of the governor's jealousy, there is no evidence. It has been suggested, not without plausibility, that they were of the sect of Judas the Galilean; and, however they may not have been formally enrolled as belonging to this sect, they may have been, in some degree, infected with the same opinions; more especially, as properly belonging to the jurisdiction of Herod, these Galileans would scarcely have been treated with such unrelenting severity, unless implicated, or suspected to be implicated, in some designs obnoxious to the Roman sway. If, however, our conjecture be right, had he appeared at this festival, Jesus might have fallen undistinguished in a general massacre of his countrymen, by the direct interference of the Roman governor, and without the guilt of his rejection and death being attributable to the rulers or the nation of the Jews.

Conceal-  
ment of  
Jesus.

Yet, be this as it may, during this period of the life of Jesus, it is most difficult to trace his course; his rapid changes have the semblance of concealment. At one time he appears at the extreme border of Palestine, the district immediately adjacent to that of Tyre and Sidon; he then seems to have descended again towards Bethsaida, and the desert country to the north of the Sea of Tiberias; he is then again on the immediate frontiers of Palestine, near the town of Cæsarea Philippi, close to the fountains of the Jordan.

(1) The point of time at which the notice of this transaction is introduced in the narrative of St. Luke, may appear irreconcilable with the opinion that it took place so far back as the previous Passover. This circumstance however admits of an easy explanation. The period at which this fact is introduced by St. Luke, was just before the last fatal visit to Jerusalem. Jesus had now expressed his fixed determination to attend the approaching Passover; he was actually on his way to the metropolis. It was precisely the time at which some who might take an interest in his personal safety, might think it well to warn him of his danger. These persons may have been entirely ignorant of his intermediate visits to Jerusalem, which had been sudden, brief, and

private. He had appeared unexpectedly; he had withdrawn without notice. They may have supposed, that having been absent at the period of the massacre in the remote parts of the country, he might be altogether unacquainted with the circumstances, or at least little impressed with their importance; or even, if not entirely ignorant, they might think it right to remind him of the dangerous commotion which had taken place at the preceding festival, and to intimate the possibility that under a governor so reckless of human life as Pilate had shown himself, and by recent circumstances not predisposed towards the Galilean name, he was exposing himself to most serious peril.



The incidents which occur at almost all these places coincide with his singular situation at this period of his life, and perpetually bear almost a direct reference to the state of public feeling at this particular time. His conduct towards the Greek or Syro-Phœnician woman may illustrate this (1). Those who watched the motions of Jesus with the greatest vigilance, either from attachment or animosity, must have beheld him with astonishment, at this period when every road was crowded with travellers towards Jerusalem, deliberately proceeding in an opposite direction; thus, at the time of the most solemn festival, moving, as it were, directly contrary to the stream, which flowed in one current towards the capital. There appears at one time to have prevailed, among some, an obscure apprehension which, though only expressed during one of his later visits to Jerusalem (2), might have begun to creep into their minds at an earlier period; that, after all, the Saviour might turn his back on his ungrateful and inhospitable country, or at least not fetter himself with the exclusive nationality inseparable from their conceptions of the true Messiah. And here, at this present instant, after having excited their hopes to the utmost, by the miracle which placed him, as it were, on a level with their lawgiver, and having afterwards afflicted them with bitter disappointment by his speech in the synagogue—here, at the season of the Passover, he was proceeding towards, if not beyond, the borders of the Holy Land; placing himself, as it were, in direct communication with the uncircumcised, and imparting those blessings to strangers and aliens, which were the undoubted, inalienable property of the privileged race.

The Syro-  
Phœnician  
woman.

At this juncture, when he was upon the borders of the territory of Tyre and Sidon, a woman of heathen extraction (3), having heard the fame of his miracles, determined to have recourse to him to heal her daughter, who was suffering under diabolic possession. Whether adopting the common title, which she had heard that Jesus had assumed, or from any obscure notion of the Messiah, which could not but have penetrated into the districts immediately bordering on Palestine, she saluted him by his title of Son of David, and implored his mercy. In this instance alone Jesus, who on all other occasions is described as prompt and forward to hear the cry of the afflicted, turns, at first, a deaf and regardless ear to her supplication: the mercy is, as it were, slowly and reluctantly wrung from him. The secret of this apparent, but unusual, indifference to suffering, no doubt lies in the circumstances of the case. Nothing

(1) Matt. xv. 21—28.; Mark. vii. 24—30.

(2) John, vii. 35.

(3) She is called in one place a Canaanite, in another a Syro-Phœnician and a Greek. She was probably of Phœnician descent, and the Jews considered the whole of the Phœnician race as

descended from the remnant of the Canaanites, who were not extirpated. She was a Greek as distinguished from a Jew, for the Jews divided mankind into Jews and Greeks, as the Greeks did into Greeks and Barbarians.

would have been so repugnant to Jewish prejudice, especially at this juncture, as his admitting at once this recognition of his title, or his receiving and rewarding the homage of any stranger from the blood of Israel, particularly one descended from the accursed race of Canaan. The conduct of the apostles shows their harsh and Jewish spirit. They are indignant at her pertinacious importunity; they almost insist on her peremptory dismissal. That a stranger, a Canaanite, should share in the mercies of their master, does not seem to have entered into their thoughts: the brand of ancient condemnation was upon her; the hereditary hatefulness of the seed of Canaan marked her as a fit object for malediction, as the appropriate prey of the evil spirits, as without hope of blessing from the God of Israel. Jesus himself at first seems to countenance this exclusive tone. He declares that he is sent only to the race of Israel; that dogs (the common and approbrious term by which all religious aliens were described), could have no hope of sharing in the blessings jealously reserved for the children of Abraham. The humility of the woman's reply, "Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the master's table," might almost disarm the antipathy of the most zealous Jew. That the Gentiles might receive a kind of secondary and inferior benefit from their Messiah, was by no means in opposition to the vulgar belief; it left them in full possession of their exclusive religious dignity, while it was rather flattering to their pride than debasing to their prejudices, that, with such limitation, the power of their Redeemer should be displayed among Gentile foreigners. By his condescension, therefore, to their prejudices, Jesus was enabled to display his own benevolence, without awakening, or confirming if already awakened, the quick suspicions of his followers.

Jesus still  
in partial  
conceal-  
ment.

After this more remote excursion, Jesus appears again, for a short time, nearer his accustomed residence; but still hovering, as it were, on the borders, and lingering rather in the wild mountainous region to the north and east of the lake, than descending to the more cultivated and populous districts to the west (1). But here his fame follows him; and even in these desert regions, multitudes, many of them bearing their sick and afflicted relatives, perpetually assemble around him (2). His conduct displays, as it were, a continual struggle between his benevolence and his caution: he seems as if he could not refrain from the indulgence of his goodness, while at the same time he is aware that every new cure may reawaken the dangerous enthusiasm from which he had so recently withdrawn himself. In the hill country of Decapolis, a deaf and dumb man is restored to speech; he is strictly enjoined, though apparently without effect, to preserve the utmost secrecy. A second

(1) This may be assigned to the period between the Passover and the Pentecost.

(2) Matt. xv. 29—34.; Mark, vii 34—37.

time the starving multitude in the desert appeal to his compassion. They are again miraculously fed, but Jesus, as though remembering the immediate consequences of the former event, dismisses them at once, and crossing in a boat to Dalmanutha or Magdala places, as it were, the lake between himself and their indiscreet zeal, or irrepressible gratitude (1). At Magdala he again encounters some of the Pharisaic party, who were, perhaps, returned from the Passover. They reiterate their perpetual demand of some sign which may satisfy their impatient incredulity, and a third time Jesus repels them with an allusion to the great "sign" of his resurrection (2).

As the Pentecost draws near, he again retires to the utmost borders of the land. He crosses back to Bethsaida, where a blind man is restored to sight, with the same strict injunctions of concealment (3). He then passes to the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, at the extreme verge of the land, a modern town, recently built on the site of the older, now named Paneas, situated almost close to the fountains of the Jordan (4).

Alone with his immediate disciples in this secluded region, he begins to unfold more distinctly, both his real character and his future fate, to their wondering ears. It is difficult to conceive the state of fluctuation and embarrassment in which the simple minds of the Apostles of Jesus must have been continually kept by what must have appeared the inexplicable, if not contradictory, conduct and language of their master. At one moment he seemed entirely to lift the veil from his own character; the next, it fell again and left them in more than their former state of suspense. Now, all is clear, distinct, comprehensible; then again, dim, doubtful, mysterious. Here their hopes are elevated to the highest, and all their preconceived notions of the greatness of the Messiah seem ripening into reality; there, the strange foreboding of his humiliating fate, which he communicates with more than usual distinctness, thrills them with apprehension. Their own destiny is opened to their prospect, crossed with the same strangely mingling lights and shadows. At one time they are promised miraculous endowments, and seem justified in all their ambitious hopes of eminence and distinction in the approaching kingdom; at the next, they are warned that they must expect to share in the humiliations and afflictions of their Teacher.

Perplexity  
of the  
Apostles.

Near Cæsarea Philippi Jesus questions his disciples as to the common view of his character. By some, it seems, he was supposed to be John the Baptist restored from the dead; by others, Elias, who was to re-appear on earth, previous to the final revelation of the Messiah; by others, Jeremiah, who, according to a tradition

Jesus near  
Cæsarea  
Philippi.

(1) Matt. xv. 32—39.; Mark, viii. 1—9.

(2) Matt. xvi. 1—12.; Mark, viii. 11—22.

(3) Mark, viii. 22—26.

(4) Mark, viii. 27.



to which we have before alluded, was to come to life : and when the ardent zeal of Peter recognises him under the most sacred title, which was universally considered as appropriated to the Messiah, " the Christ, the son of the Living God," his homage is no longer declined ; and the Apostle himself is commended in language so strong, that the pre-eminence of Peter over the rest of the twelve has been mainly supported by the words of Jesus, employed on this occasion. The transport of the Apostles at this open and distinct avowal of his character, although at present confined to the secret circle of his more immediate adherents, no doubt before long to be publicly proclaimed, and asserted with irresistible power, is almost instantaneously checked ; the bright expanding prospects change in a moment to the gloomy reverse, when Jesus proceeds to foretell to a greater number of his followers (1) his approaching lamentable fate, the hostility of all the rulers of the nation, his death, and that which was probably the least intelligible part of the whole prediction—his resurrection (2). The highly excited Peter cannot endure the sudden and unexpected reverse ; he betrays his reluctance to believe that the Messiah, whom he had now, he supposed, full authority to array in the highest temporal splendour which his imagination could suggest, could possibly apprehend so degrading a doom. Jesus not only represses the ardour of the apostle, but enters at some length into the earthly dangers to which his disciples would be exposed, and the unworldly nature of Christian reward. They listened, but how far they comprehended these sublime truths must be conjectured from their subsequent conduct.

It was to minds thus preoccupied, on one hand full of unrepressed hopes of the instantaneous revelation of the Messiah in all his temporal greatness, on the other, embarrassed with the apparently irreconcilable predictions of the humiliation of their Master, that the extraordinary scene of the Transfiguration was presented (3). Whatever explanation we adopt of this emblematic vision, its purport and its effect upon the minds of the three disciples who beheld it, remain the same (4). Its significant sights and sounds manifestly announced the equality, the superiority of Jesus to the founder, and to him who may almost be called the restorer of the Theocracy, to Moses the lawgiver, and Elias the representative of the prophets. These holy personages had, as it were, seemed to pay homage to Jesus ; they had vanished, and he alone had remained. The appearance of Moses and Elias at the time of the Messiah, was strictly in accordance with the general tradi-

The Transfiguration.

(1) Mark, viii. 34.

(2) Matt. xvi. 21—28. ; Mark, viii. 31. ix. 1. ; Luke, iv. 18—27.

(3) Tradition has assigned this scene to Mount Tabor, probably for no better reason than because Tabor is the best known and most conspicuous height in the whole of Galilee. The

order of the narrative points most distinctly to the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, and the Mons Paneus is a much more probable situation.

(4) Matt. xvii. 1—21. ; Mark, ix. 2—29. ; Luke, ix. 28—42.

tion(1); and when in his astonishment Peter proposes to make there three of those huts or cabins of boughs, which the Jews were accustomed to run up as temporary dwellings at the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles, he seems to have supposed that the spirits of the lawgiver and the prophet were to make their permanent residence with the Messiah, and that this mountain was to be, as it were, another sacred place, a second Sinai, from which the new kingdom was to commence its dominion, and issue its mandates.

The other circumstances of the transaction, the height on which they stood, their own half-waking state, the sounds from heaven (whether articulate voices or thunder, which appeared to give the divine assent to their own preconceived notions of the Messiah), the wonderful change in the appearance of Jesus, the glittering cloud which seemed to absorb the two spirits, and leave Jesus alone upon the mountain,—all the incidents of this majestic and mysterious scene, whether presented as dreams before their sleeping, or as visions before their waking senses, tended to elevate still higher their already exalted notions of their Master. Again, however, they appear to have been doomed to hear a confirmation of that, which, if their reluctant minds had not refused to entertain the humiliating thought, would have depressed them to utter despondency. After healing the dæmoniac, whom they had in vain attempted to exorcise, the assurance of his approaching death is again renewed and in the clearest language, by their master(2).

From the distant and the solitary scenes where these transactions had taken place, Jesus now returns to the populous district about Capernaum. On his entrance into the city, the customary payment of half a shekel for the maintenance of the Temple, a capitation tax which was levied on every Jew, in every quarter of the world, is demanded of Jesus(3). How then will he act, who but now declared himself to his disciples as the Messiah, the son of God? will he claim his privilege of exemption as the Messiah? will the Son of God contribute to the maintenance of the Temple of the Father? or will the long-expected public declaration at length take place? will the claim of immunity virtually confirm his claim to the privileges of his descent? He again reverts to his former cautious habit of never unnecessarily offending the prejudices of the people; he complies with the demand, and the money is miraculously supplied.

Tribute  
money.

But on the minds of the Apostles the recent scenes are still work-

(1) *Dixit sanctus benedictus Mosi, sicut vitam tuam dedisti pro Israele in hoc seculo, sic tempore futuro, tempore Messia, quando mittam ad eos Eliam prophetam vos duo venietis simul.*

*Debar. Rab. 293. Compare Lightfoot, Schoetgen, and Eisenmenger, in loco.*

(2) *Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Mark, ix. 30—32. Luke, ix. 44, 45.*

(3) *Matt. xvii. 24—28.*

Contention of the Apostles.

Jesus commends a child to the imitation of the Apostles.

Feast of Tabernacles.

ing with unallayed excitement. The dark, the melancholy language of their Master appears to pass away and leave no impression upon their minds; while every circumstance which animates or exalts, is treasured with the utmost care; and in a short time, on their road to Capernaum, they are fiercely disputing among themselves their relative rank in the instantaneously expected kingdom of the Messiah (1). The beauty of the significant action by which Jesus repressed the rising emotions of their pride, is heightened by considering it in relation to the immediate circumstances (2). Even now, at this crisis of their exaltation, he takes a child; places it in the midst of them, and declares, that only those in such a state of innocence and docility, are qualified to become members of the new community. Over such humble and blameless beings, over children, and over men of child-like dispositions, the vigilant providence of God would watch with unsleeping care, and those who injured them would be exposed to his strong displeasure (3). The narrow jealousy of the Apostles, which would have prohibited a stranger from making use of the name of Jesus for the purpose of exorcism, was rebuked in the same spirit: all who would embrace the cause of Christ, were to be encouraged rather than discountenanced. Some of the most striking sentences, and one parable which illustrates in the most vivid manner the extent of Christian forgiveness and mutual forbearance, close, as it were, this period of the Saviour's life, by instilling into the minds of his followers, as the time of the final collision with his adversaries approaches, the milder and more benignant tenets of the evangelic religion.

The Passover had come, and Jesus had remained in the obscure borders of the land; the Pentecost had passed away, and the expected public assumption of the title and functions of the Messiah had not yet been made. The autumnal Feast of Tabernacles (4) is at hand; his incredulous brethren again assemble around him, and even the impatient disciples can no longer endure the suspense: they urge him with almost imperious importunity to cast off at length his prudential, his mysterious reserve; at least to vindicate the faith of his followers, and to justify the zeal of his partisans, by displaying those works, which he seemed so studiously to conceal among the obscure towns of Galilee, in the crowded metropolis of the nation at some great period of national assemblage (5). In order to prevent any indiscreet proclamation of his approach, or any procession of his followers, through the country,

(1) It is observable that the ambitious disputes of the disciples concerning primacy or preference, usually follow the mention of Christ's death and resurrection. Luke, ix. 44—46.; Matt. xx. 18—20.; Luke, xxii. 22—24. They had so strong a prepossession that the resurrection of Christ (*which they no doubt understood in a purely Jewish sense*, compare Mark, ix. 10.) should introduce the earthly kingdom of the Messiah,

that no declaration of our Lord could remove it from their minds; they always "understood not what was spoken." Lightfoot, in loco.

(2) Matt. xviii. 1—6.; Mark, ix. 33—37.

(3) Matt. xviii. 6—10.; Mark, ix. 37.

(4) On the fifteenth day of the seventh month. Deut. xxiii. 39—43. About the end of our September, or the beginning of October.

(5) John. vii. 2. to viii. 59.



and probably lest the rulers should have time to organise their hostile measures, Jesus disguises under ambiguous language his intention of going up to Jerusalem; he permits his brethren, who suppose that he is still in Galilee, to set forward without him. Still, however, his movements are the subject of anxious inquiry among the assembling multitudes in the capital; and many secret and half-stifled murmurs among the Galileans, some exalting his virtues, others representing him as a dangerous disturber of the public peace, keep up the general curiosity about his character and designs (1). On a sudden, in the midst of the festival, he appears in the Temple, and takes his station as a public teacher. The rulers seem to have been entirely off their guard; and the multitude are perplexed by the bold and as yet uninterrupted publicity, with which a man, whom the Sanhedrin were well known to have denounced as guilty of a capital offence, entered the court of the Temple, and calmly pursued his office of instructing the people. The fact that he had taken on himself that office was of itself unprecedented and surprising to many. As we have observed before, he belonged to no school, he had been bred at the feet of none of the recognised and celebrated teachers, yet he assumed superiority to all, and arraigned the whole of the wise men of vain glory rather than of sincere piety. His own doctrine was from a higher source, and possessed more undeniable authority. He even boldly anticipated the charge, which he knew would be renewed against him, his violation of the Sabbath by his works of mercy. He accused them of conspiring against his life; a charge which seems to have excited indignation as well as astonishment (2). The suspense and agitation of the assemblage are described with a few rapid, but singularly expressive, touches. It was part of the vague popular belief, that the Messiah would appear in some strange, sudden, and surprising manner. The circumstances of his coming were thus left to the imagination of each to fill up, according to his own notions of that which was striking and magnificent. But the extraordinary incidents which attended the birth of Jesus were forgotten, or had never been generally known; his origin and extraction were supposed to be ascertained; he appeared but as the legitimate descendant of a humble Galilean family; his acknowledged brethren were ordinary and undistinguished men. "We know this man whence he is; but when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence he is." His mysterious allusions to his higher descent were heard with mingled feelings of indignation and awe. On the multitude his wonderful works had made a favourable impression, which was not a little increased by the inactivity and hesitation of the rulers. The Sanhedrin, in which the Pharisaic

Jesus in  
the Tem-  
ple at Je-  
rusalem.

(1) John, vii. 11—13.

(2) John, vii. 19—24.

Perplexity  
of the  
Sanhe-  
drin.

party still predominated, were evidently unprepared, and had concerted no measures either to counteract his progress in the public mind, or to secure his person. Their authority in such a case was probably, in the absence of the Roman prefect, or without the concurrence of the commander of the Roman guard in the Antonia, by no means clearly ascertained. With every desire, therefore, for his apprehension, they at first respected his person, and their non-interference was mistaken for connivance, if not as a sanction, for his proceedings. They determine at length on stronger measures; their officers are sent out to arrest the offender, but seem to have been overawed by the tranquil dignity and commanding language of Jesus, and were perhaps in some degree controlled by the manifest favour of the people (1).

On the great day of the feast the agitation of the assembly, as well as the perplexity of the Sanhedrin, is at its height. Jesus still appears publicly; he makes a striking allusion to the ceremonial of the day. Water was drawn from the hallowed fountain of Siloah, and borne into the Temple with the sound of the trumpet and with great rejoicing. "Who," say the Rabbins, "hath not seen the rejoicing on the drawing of this water, hath seen no rejoicing at all." They sang in the procession, "with joy shall they draw water from the wells of salvation (2)." In the midst of this tumult, Jesus, according to his custom, calmly diverts the attention to the great moral end of his own teaching, and in allusion to the rite, declares that from himself are to flow the real living waters of salvation. The ceremony almost appears to have been arrested in its progress; and open discussions of his claims to be considered as the Messiah divide the wondering multitude. The Sanhedrin find that they cannot depend on their own officers, whom they accuse of surrendering themselves to the popular deception, in favour of one condemned by the rulers of the nation. Even within their council, Nicodemus, the secret proselyte of Jesus, ventures to interfere in his behalf; and though, with the utmost caution, he appeals to the law, and asserts the injustice of condemning Jesus without a hearing: (he seems to have desired that Jesus might be admitted publicly to plead his own cause before the Sanhedrin), he is accused by the more violent of leaning to the Galilean party—the party which bore its own condemnation in the simple fact of adhering to a Galilean prophet. The council dispersed without coming to any decision.

Woman  
taken in  
adultery.

On the next day, for the former transactions had taken place in the earlier part of the week, the last, the most crowded and solemn day of the festival, a more insidious attempt is made, whether from a premeditated or fortuitous circumstance, to undermine the grow-

(1) John, verse 32.

(2) John, vii, 32—39.; Lightfoot, in loco.

ing popularity of Jesus; an attempt to make him assume a judicial authority in the case of a woman taken in the act of adultery. Such an act would probably have been resisted by the whole Sanhedrin as an invasion of their province; and as it appeared that he must either acquit or condemn the criminal, in either case he would give an advantage to his adversaries. If he inclined to severity, they might be able, notwithstanding the general benevolence of his character, to contrast their own leniency in the administration of the law (this was the characteristic of the Pharisaic party, which distinguished them from the Sadducees, and of this the Rabbinical writings furnish many curious illustrations), with the rigour of the new teacher, and thus to conciliate the naturally compassionate feelings of the people, which would have been shocked by the unusual spectacle of a woman suffering death, or even condemned to capital punishment, for such an offence (1). If, on the other hand, he acquitted her, he abrogated the express letter of the Mosaic statute; and the multitude might be inflamed by this new evidence of that which the ruling party had constantly endeavoured to instil into their minds, the hostility of Jesus to the law of their forefathers, and his secret design of abolishing the whole long-reverenced and heaven-enacted code. Nothing can equal, if the expression may be ventured, the address of Jesus, in extricating himself from this difficulty; his turning the current of popular odium, or even contempt, upon his assailants; the manner in which, by summoning them to execute the law, he extorts a tacit confession of their own loose morals,—“He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” (this being the office of the chief accuser); and finally shows mercy to the accused, without in the least invalidating the decision of the law against the crime, yet not without the most gentle and effective moral admonition.

After this discomfiture of his opponents, Jesus appears to have been permitted to pursue his course of teaching undisturbed, until new circumstances occurred to inflame the resentment of his enemies. He had taken his station in a part of the Temple court called the Treasury. His language became more mysterious, yet at the same time more authoritative—more full of those allusions to his character as the Messiah, to his divine descent, and at length to his pre-existence. The former of these were in some degree familiar to the popular conception; the latter, though it entered into the higher notion of the Messiah, which was prevalent among those who entertained the loftiest views of his character, nevertheless, from the manner in which it was expressed, jarred with the sharpest discord upon the popular ear. They listened with patience to

Jesus  
teaches in  
the Tem-  
ple.

(1) Grotius has a different view:—*Ut cum accusarent aut apud Romanos imminere majestatis, aut apud populum imminere libertatis. That*

*they might accuse him to the Romans of encroaching on their authority, or to the people of surrendering their rights and independence.*



Jesus while he proclaimed himself the light of the world : though they questioned his right to assume the title of "Son of the Heavenly Father" without further witness than he had already produced, they yet permitted him to proceed in his discourse : they did not interrupt him when he still further alluded, in dark and ambiguous terms, to his own fate : when he declared that God was with him, and that his doctrines were pleasing to the Almighty Father, a still more favourable impression was made, and many openly espoused his belief ; but when he touched on their rights and privileges as descendants of Abraham, the subject on which above all they were most jealous and sensitive, the collision became inevitable. He spoke of their freedom, the moral freedom from the slavery of their own passions, to which they were to be exalted by the revelation of the truth ; but freedom was a word which to them only bore another sense. They broke in at once with indignant denial that the race of Abraham, however the Roman troops were guarding their Temple, had ever forfeited their national independence (1). He spoke as if the legitimacy of their descent from Abraham depended not on their hereditary genealogy, but on the moral evidence of their similarity in virtue to their great forefather. The good, the pious, the gentle Abraham was not the father of those who were meditating the murder of an innocent man. If their fierce and sanguinary dispositions disqualified them from being the children of Abraham, how much more from being, as they boasted, the adopted children of God ; the spirit of evil, in whose darkest and most bloody temper they were ready to act, was rather the parent of men with dispositions so diabolic (2). At this their wrath bursts forth in more unrestrained vehemence ; the worst and most bitter appellations by which a Jew could express his hatred, were heaped on Jesus ; he is called a Samaritan, and declared to be under dæmoniac possession. But when Jesus proceeded to assert his title to the Messiahship, by proclaiming that Abraham had received some intimation of the future great religious revolution to be effected by him ; when he who was "not fifty years old" (that is, not arrived at that period when the Jews, who assumed the public offices at thirty, were released from them on account of their age), declared that he had existed before Abraham ; when he thus placed himself not merely on an equality with, but asserted his immeasurable superiority to, the great father of their race ; when he uttered the awful and significant words which identified him, as it were, with the great self-existent Deity, "Before Abraham was, I am," they immediately rushed forward to crush without trial, without further hearing, him whom they considered the self-convicted blasphemer. As there was always some work of

(1) John, viii. 33.

(2) John, viii. 44.

building or repair going on within the Temple, which was not considered to be finished till many years after, these instruments for the fulfilment of the legal punishment were immediately at hand; and Jesus only escaped from being stoned on the spot by passing, during the wild and frantic tumult, through the midst of his assailants, and withdrawing from the court of the Temple.

But even in this exigency he pauses at not great distance to perform an act of mercy (1). There was a man, notoriously blind from his birth, who seems to have taken his accustomed station in some way leading to the Temple. Some of the disciples of Jesus had accompanied him, and perhaps, as it were, covered his retreat from his furious assailants; and as by this time, probably, being safe from pursuit, they stopped near the place where the blind man stood. The whole history of the cure of this blind man is remarkable, as singularly illustrative of Jewish feeling and opinion, and on account both of the critical juncture at which it took place, and the strict judicial investigation which it seems to have undergone before the hostile Sanhedrin. The common popular belief ascribed every malady or affliction to some sin, of which it was the direct and providential punishment—a notion, as we have before hinted, of all others, the most likely to harden the bigoted heart to indifference, or even contempt and abhorrence of the heaven-visited, and therefore heaven-branded, sufferer. This notion, which however was so overpowered by the strong spirit of nationalism as to obtain for the Jews in foreign countries the admiration of the heathen for their mutual compassion towards each other, while they had no kindly feeling for strangers, no doubt, from the language of Jesus on many occasions, exercised a most pernicious influence on the general character in their native land, where the lessons of Christian kindness and humanity appear to have been as deeply needed as they were unacceptable. But how was this notion of the penal nature of all suffering to be reconciled with the fact of a man being born subject to one of the most grievous afflictions of our nature—the want of sight? They were thus thrown back upon those other singular

Healing  
the blind  
man.

(1) I hesitate at the arrangement of no passage in the whole narrative more than this history of the blind man. Many harmonists have placed it during the visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, at the Feast of Dedication. The connection in the original, however, seems more natural, as a continuation of the preceding incident: yet at first sight it seems extremely improbable that Jesus should have time during his hurried escape to work this miracle; and still more that he should again encounter his enraged adversaries without dangerous or fatal consequences. We may however suppose that this incident took place without the Temple, probably in the street leading down from the Temple to the Valley of Kidron, and to Bethany, where Jesus spent the night. The attempt to stone him was an outburst of popular tumult: it is clear that he had been guilty of no offence, legally capital,

or it would have been urged against him at his last trial, since witnesses could not have been wanting to his words: and it seems quite clear that, however they might have been glad to have availed themselves of any such ebullition of popular violence, as a court, the Sanhedrin, divided and in awe of the Roman power, was constrained to proceed with regularity, and according to the strict letter of the law. Macknight would place the cure immediately after the escape from the Temple, the recognition of the man, and the subsequent proceedings during the visit at the Dedication. But in fact the popular feeling seems to have been in a perpetual state of fluctuation; at one instant their indignation was inflamed by the language of Jesus, at the next some one of his extraordinary works seems to have caused as strong a sensation, at least with a considerable party, in his favour.

notions which prevailed among the Jews of that period—either his fathers or himself must have sinned. Was it, then, a malady inherited from the guilt of his parents? or was the soul, having sinned in a pre-existent state, now expiating its former offences in the present form of being? This notion, embraced by Plato in the West, was more likely to have been derived by the Jews from the East (1), where it may be regularly traced from India through the different oriental religions. Jesus at once corrected this inveterate error, and having anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay, sent him to wash in the celebrated pool of Siloam, at no great distance from the street of the Temple (2). The return of the blind man restored to sight excited so much astonishment, that the bystanders began to dispute whether he was really the same who had been so long familiarly known. The man set their doubts at rest by declaring himself to be the same. The Sanhedrin, now so actively watching the actions of Jesus, and indeed inflamed to the utmost resentment, had no course but, if possible, to invalidate the effect of such a miracle on the public mind; they hoped either to detect some collusion between the parties, or to throw suspicion on the whole transaction: at all events the case was so public, that they could not avoid bringing it under the cognisance of their tribunal. The man was summoned, and, as it happened to have been the Sabbath, the stronger Pharisaic party were in hopes of getting rid of the question altogether by the immediate decision, that a man guilty of a violation of the law could not act under the sanction of God. But a considerable party in the Sanhedrin were still either too prudent, too just, or too much impressed by the evidence of the case, to concur in so summary a sentence. This decision of the council appears to have led to a more close investigation of the whole transaction. The first object appears to have been, by questioning the man himself, to implicate him as an adherent of Jesus, and so to throw discredit upon his testimony. The man, either from caution or ignorance of the character assumed by Jesus, merely replied that he believed him to be a prophet. Baffled on this point, the next step of the Pharisaic party is to inquire into the reality of the malady and the cure. The parents of the blind man are examined; their deposition simply affirms the fact of their son having been born blind, and having received his sight; for it was now notorious that the Sanhedrin had threatened all the partisans of Jesus with the terrible sentence of excommunication; and the timid parents, trembling before this awful tribunal, refer the

Conduct of  
the Sanhe-  
drin.  
Near  
Samaria.

(1) It may be traced in the Egypto-Jewish book of the Wisdom of Solomon, viii. 19, 20. The Pharisees' notion of the transmigration of souls may be found in Josephus, Ant. xviii. 1.

(2) It is a curious coincidence that anointing a blind man's eyes on the Sabbath is expressly

forbidden in the Jewish traditional law. Kuinoël in loc. According to Grotius, opening the eyes of the blind was an acknowledged sign of the Messiah. Midrash in Psalm, cxlvi. 8., Isaiah, xlii. 7.; it was a miracle never known to be wrought by Moses or by any other prophet.



judges to their son for all further information on this perilous question.

The further proceedings of the Sanhedrin are still more remarkable : unable to refute the fact of the miraculous cure, they endeavour, nevertheless, to withhold from Jesus all claim upon the gratitude of him whom he had relieved, and all participation in the power with which the instantaneous cure was wrought. The man is exhorted to give praise for the blessing to God alone, and to abandon the cause of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they authoritatively denounce as a sinner. He rejoins, with straight-forward simplicity, that he simply deposes to the fact of his blindness, and of his having received his sight : on such high questions as the character of Jesus, he presumes not at first to dispute with the great legal tribunal, with the chosen wisdom of the nation. Wearied, however, at length with their pertinacious examination, the man seems to discover the vantage ground on which he stands ; the altercation becomes more spirited on his part, more full of passionate violence on theirs. He declares that he has already again and again repeated the circumstances of the transaction, and that it is in vain for them to question him further, unless they are determined, if the truth of the miracle should be established, to acknowledge the divine mission of Jesus. This seems to have been the object at which the more violent party in the Sandhedrin aimed ; so far to throw him off his guard, as to make him avow himself the partisan of Jesus, and by this means to shake his whole testimony. On the instant they begin to revile him, to appeal to the popular clamour, to declare him a secret adherent of Jesus, while they were the stedfast disciples of Moses. God was acknowledged to have spoken by Moses, and to compare Jesus with him was inexpiable impiety — Jesus, of whose origin they professed themselves ignorant. The man rejoins in still bolder terms, “Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, but yet he hath opened mine eyes.” He continues in the same strain openly to assert his conviction that no man, unless commissioned by God, could work such wonders. Their whole history, abounding as it did with extraordinary events, displayed nothing more wonderful than that which had so recently taken place in his person. This daring and disrespectful language excites the utmost indignation in the whole assembly. They revert to the popular opinion, that the blindness with which the man was born, was a proof of his having been accursed of God. “Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?” God marked thy very birth, thy very cradle, with the indelible sign of his displeasure ; and therefore the testimony of one branded by the wrath of Heaven can be of no value. Forgetful that even on their own principle, if, by being born blind, the man was manifestly an object of the divine anger, his gaining his sight

was an evidence equally unanswerable of the divine favour. But while they traced the hand of God in the curse, they refused to trace it in the blessing; to close the eyes was a proof of divine power, but to open them none whatever. The fearless conduct, however, of the man appears to have united the divided council; the formal and terrible sentence of excommunication was pronounced, probably for the first time, against any adherent of Jesus. The evangelist concludes the narrative, as if to show that the man was not as yet a declared disciple of Christ, with a second interview between the blind man and Jesus, in which Jesus openly accepted the title of the Messiah, the Son of God, and received the homage of the now avowed adherent. Nor did Jesus discontinue his teaching on account of this declared interposition of the Sanhedrin; his manifest superiority throughout this transaction rather appears to have caused a new schism in the council, which secured him from any violent measures on their part, until the termination of the festival.

Another collision takes place with some of the Pharisaic party, with whom he now seems scarcely to keep any measure: he openly denounces them as misleading the people, and declares himself the "one true Shepherd." Whither Jesus retreated after this conflict with the ruling powers, we have no distinct information—most probably however into Galilee (1); nor is it possible with certainty to assign those events, which filled up the period between the autumnal Feast of Tabernacles and that of the Dedication of the Temple, which took place in the winter. Now, however, Jesus appears more distinctly to have avowed his determination not to remain in his more concealed and private character in Galilee: but when the occasion should demand, when, at the approaching Passover, the whole nation should be assembled in the metropolis, he would confront them, and at length bring his acceptance or rejection to a crisis (2). He now, at times at least, assumes greater state; messengers are sent before him to proclaim his arrival in the different towns and villages; and as the Feast of Dedication draws near, he approaches the borders of Samaria, and sends forward some of his followers into a neighbouring village, to announce his approach (3). Whether the Samaritans may have entertained some hopes, from the rumour of his former proceedings in their country, that, persecuted by the Jews, and avowedly opposed to the

Near  
Samaria.

(1) From this period the difficulty of arranging a consistent chronological narrative out of the separate relations of the evangelists, increases to the greatest degree. Mr. Greswell, to establish his system, is actually obliged to make Jesus, when the Samaritans refuse to receive him because "his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem," to be travelling in the directly opposite direction. He likewise, in my opinion, on quite unsatisfactory grounds, endeavours to

prove that the "village of Martha and Mary was not Bethany." Any arrangement which places (Luke, x. 38—42.) the scene in the house of Mary and Martha, after the raising of Lazarus, appears highly improbable.

(2) By taking the expression of St. Luke "he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," in this more general sense, many difficulties, if not avoided, are considerably diminished.

(3) Luke, ix. 51—56

leading parties in Jerusalem, he might espouse their party in the national quarrel, and were therefore instigated by disappointment as well as jealousy; or whether it was merely an accidental outburst of the old irreconcilable feud, the inhospitable village refused to receive him (1). The disciples were now elate with the expectation of the approaching crisis; on their minds all the dispiriting predictions of the fate of their Master passed away without the least impression; they were indignant that their triumphant procession should be arrested; and with these more immediate and peculiar motives mingled, no doubt, the implacable spirit of national hostility. They thought that the hour of vengeance was now come; that even their gentle Master would resent on these deadliest foes of the race of Israel, this deliberate insult on his dignity; that, as he had in some respects resembled the ancient prophets, he would now not hesitate to assume that fiercer and more terrific majesty, with which, according to their ancient histories, these holy men had at times been avenged; they entreated their Master to call down fire from heaven to consume the village. Jesus simply replied by a sentence, which at once established the incalculable difference between his own religion and that which it was to succeed. This sentence, most truly sublime and most characteristic of the evangelical religion, ever since the establishment of Christianity has been struggling to maintain its authority against the still-reviving Judaism, which, inseparable it should seem from uncivilised and unchristian man, has constantly endeavoured to array the Deity, rather in his attributes of destructive power than of preserving mercy. "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." So speaking he left the inhospitable Samaritans unharmed, and calmly passed to another village.

It appears to me probable that he here left the direct road to the metropolis through Samaria, and turned aside to the district about Scythopolis and the valley of the Jordan, and most likely crossed into Peræa (2). From hence, if not before, he sent out his messengers with greater regularity (3), and it might seem, to keep up some resemblance with the established institutions of the nation, he chose the number of Seventy, a number already sanctified in the notions of the people, as that of the great Sanhedrin of the nation, who deduced their own origin and authority from the Council of Seventy, established by Moses in the wilderness. The Seventy after a short absence returned and made a favourable report of the in-

(1) The attendance of the Jews at the Feast of the Dedication, a solemnity of more recent institution, was not unlikely to be still more obnoxious to the possessors of the rival temple, than the other great national feasts. This consideration, in the want of more decisive grounds, may be some argument for placing this event at the present period. I find that Doddridge had before suggested this allusion. The inhabitants

of Ginea (Josephus, Ant. xx. ch. 6.) fell on certain Galileans proceeding to Jerusalem for one of the feasts, and slew many of them.

(2) After the visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Dedication, he went *again* (John, x. 40.) into the country beyond Jordan; he must therefore have been there before the Feast.

(3) Luke, x. 1—16.



fluence which they had obtained over the people (1). The language of Jesus, both in his charge to his disciples and in his observations on the report of their success, appears to indicate the still approaching crisis; it should seem that even the towns in which he had wrought his mightiest works, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, at least the general mass of the people, and the influential rulers, now had declared against him. They are condemned in terms of unusual severity for their blindness; yet among the meek and humble he had a still increasing hold—and the days were now at hand, which the disciples were permitted to behold, and for which the wise and good for many ages had been looking forward with still baffled hopes (2).

Feast of  
Dedica-  
tion.  
Jesus  
again in  
Jerusalem.

It was during the absence of the Seventy, or immediately after their return, that Jesus, who perhaps had visited in the interval many towns and villages both of Galilee and Peræa, which his central position near the Jordan commanded, descended to the winter Festival of the Dedication (3). Once it is clear that he drew near to Jerusalem, at least as near as the village of Bethany; and though not insensible to the difficulties of this view, we cannot but think that this village, about two miles' distance from Jerusalem, and the house of the relations of Lazarus, was the place where he was concealed during both his two later unexpected and secret visits to the metropolis, and where he in general passed the nights during the week of the last Passover (4). His appearance at this festival seems to have been, like the former, sudden and unlooked-for. The multitude probably at this time was not so great, both on account of the season, and because the festival was kept in other places besides Jerusalem (5), though of course with the greatest splendour and concourse in the Temple itself. Jesus was seen walking in one of the porticoes or arcades which surrounded the outer court of the Temple, that to the east, which from its greater splendour, being formed of a triple instead of a double row of columns, was called by the name of Solomon's. The leading Jews, whether unprepared for more violent measures, or with some insidious design, now address him, seemingly neither in an hostile nor unfriendly tone. It almost appears, that having before at-

(1) Luke, 17—20.

(2) Luke, x. 24. The parable of the good Samaritan may gain in impressiveness if considered in connection with the recent transactions in Samaria, and as perhaps delivered during the journey to Jerusalem, near the place where the scene is laid—the wild and dangerous country between Jericho and Jerusalem.

(3) This feast was instituted by Judas Maccabeus. 1 Macc. 4—5. It was kept on the 25th of the month Cisleu, answering to our 15th of December. The houses were illuminated at night during the whole period of the feast, which lasted eight days. John, x. 22—39.

(4) In connecting Luke, x. 38—42. with John,

x. 22—39., there is the obvious difficulty of the former evangelist mentioning the comparatively unimportant circumstance which he relates, and being entirely silent about the latter. But this objection is common to all harmonies of the Gospels. The silence of the three former Evangelists concerning the events in Jerusalem is equally remarkable, under every system, whether, according to Bishop Marsh and the generality of the great German scholars we suppose the Evangelists to have compiled from a common document, or adhere to any of the older theories, that each wrote either entirely independently or as supplementary to the preceding Evangelists.

(5) Lightfoot, *in loco*.

tempted force, they are now inclined to try the milder course of persuasion; their language sounds like the expostulation of impatience. Why, they inquire, does he thus continue to keep up this strange excitement? why thus persist in endangering the public peace? why does he not avow himself at once? why does he not distinctly assert himself to be the Christ, and by some signal, some public, some indisputable, evidence of his being the Messiah, at once set at rest the doubts, and compose the agitation of the troubled nation? The answer of Jesus is an appeal to the wonderful works which he had already wrought; but this evidence the Jews, in their present state and disposition of mind, were morally incapable of appreciating. He had already avowed himself, but in language unintelligible to their ears; a few had heard him, a few would receive the reward of their obedience, and those few were, in the simple phrase, the sheep who heard his voice. But as he proceeded, his language assumed a higher, a more mysterious, tone. He spoke of his unity with the great Father of the worlds. "I and my Father are one (1)." However understood, his words sounded to the Jewish ears so like direct blasphemy, as again to justify on the spot the summary punishment of the law. Without further trial they prepared to stone him where he stood. Jesus arrested their fury on the instant by a calm appeal to the manifest moral goodness, as well as the physical power, of the Deity displayed in his works. The Jews in plain terms accused him of blasphemously ascribing to himself the title of God. He replied by reference to their sacred books, in which they could not deny that the divine name was sometimes ascribed to beings of an inferior rank; how much less, therefore, ought they to be indignant at that sacred name being assumed by him, in whom the great attributes of divinity, both the power and the goodness, had thus manifestly appeared. His wonderful works showed the intercommunion of nature in this respect, between himself and the Almighty. This explanation, far beyond their moral perceptions, only excited a new burst of fury, which Jesus eluded, and retiring again from the capital, returned to the district beyond the Jordan.

The three months which elapsed between the Feast of Dedication and the Passover (2) were no doubt occupied in excursions, if not in regular progresses, through the different districts of the Holy Land, on both sides of the river, which his central position, near one of the most celebrated fords, was extremely well suited to command. Wherever he went, multitudes assembled around him; and at one time the government of Herod was seized with alarm, and Jesus received information that his life was in danger, and that he might apprehend the same fate which had befallen John the Baptist

Period between the Feast of Dedication and the Passover.

(1) John, x. 30.

xviii. 34.; Matt xix. xx. to verse 28.; Mark, x.

(2) Luke, xi. xii. xiii. to verse 30., also to 1—31.

if he remained in Galilee or Peræa, both which districts were within the dominions of Herod. It is remarkable that this intelligence came from some of the Pharisaic party (1), whether suborned by Herod, thus peacefully, and without incurring any further unpopularity, to rid his dominions of one who might become either the designing or the innocent cause of tumult and confusion (the reflection of Jesus on the crafty character of Herod (2) may confirm the notion, that the Pharisees were acting under his insidious direction), or whether the Pharisaic party were of themselves desirous to force Jesus, before the Passover arrived, into the province of Judæa, where the Roman government might either, of itself, be disposed to act with decision, or might grant permission to the Sanhedrin to interpose its authority with the utmost rigour. But it was no doubt in this quarter that he received intelligence of a very different nature, that led to one of his præternatural works, which of itself was the most extraordinary, and evidently made the deepest impression upon the public mind (3). The raising of Lazarus may be considered the proximate cause of the general conspiracy for his death, by throwing the popular feeling more decidedly on his side, and thereby deepening the fierce animosity of the rulers, who now saw that they had no alternative but to crush him at once, or to admit his triumph.

Raising of  
Lazarus.

We have supposed that it was at the house of Lazarus, or of his relatives, in the village of Bethany, that Jesus had passed the nights during his recent visits to Jerusalem : at some distance from the metropolis he receives information of the dangerous illness of that faithful adherent, whom he seems to have honoured with peculiar attachment. He at first assures his followers in ambiguous language of the favourable termination of the disorder ; and after two day's delay, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his disciples who feared that he was precipitately rushing, as it were, into the toils of his enemies, and who resolve to accompany him, though in acknowledged apprehension that his death was inevitable, Jesus first informs his disciples of the actual death of Lazarus, yet, nevertheless, persists in his determination of visiting Bethany. On his arrival at Bethany the dead man, who according to Jewish usage had no doubt been immediately buried, had been four days in the sepulchre. The house was full of Jews, who had come to console, according to their custom, the afflicted relatives ; and the characters assigned in other parts of the history to the two sisters, are strik-

(1) Luke, xiii. 31—35.

(2) Wetstein has struck out the character of Herod with great strength and success:—"Hic, ut plerique ejus temporis principes et præsides, mores ad exemplum Tiberii imperatoris, qui nullam ex virtutibus suis magis quam dissimulationem diligebat, composuit; tunc autem erat annosa vulpes, cum jam triginta annos principa-

tum gessisset, et diversissimas personas egisset, personam servi apud Tiberium, domini apud Galileam, amici Sejano, Artabano, fratribus suis Archelao, Philippo, Herodi alteri, quorum studia erant diversissima, et inter se et a studiis Herodis ipsius." In loc.

(3) John, xi. 1—46.



ingly exemplified in their conduct on this mournful occasion. The more active Martha hastens to meet Jesus, laments his absence at the time of her brother's death, and, on his declaration of the resurrection of her brother, reverts only to the general resurrection of mankind, a truth embodied in a certain sense in the Jewish creed. So far Christ answers in language which intimates his own close connection with that resurrection of mankind. The gentler Mary falls at the feet of Jesus, and with many tears expresses the same confidence of his power, had he been present, of averting her brother's death. So deep, however, is their reverence, that neither of them ventures the slightest word of expostulation at his delay; nor does either appear to have entertained the least hope of further relief. The tears of Jesus himself appear to confirm the notion, that the case is utterly desperate; and some of the Jews, in a less kindly spirit, begin to murmur at his apparent neglect of a friend, to whom, nevertheless, he appears so tenderly attached. It should seem that it was in the presence of some of these persons, by no means well-disposed to his cause, that Jesus proceeded to the sepulchre, summoned the dead body to arise, and was obeyed.

The intelligence of this inconceivable event spread with the utmost rapidity to Jerusalem : the Sanhedrin was instantly summoned, and a solemn debate commenced, finally to decide on their future proceedings towards Jesus. It had now become evident that his progress in the popular belief must be at once arrested, or the power of the Sanhedrin, the influence of the Pharisaic party, was lost for ever. With this may have mingled, in minds entirely ignorant of the real nature of the new religion, an honest and conscientious, though blind, dread of some tumult or insurrection taking place, which would give the Romans an excuse for wresting away the lingering semblance of national independence, to which they adhered with such passionate attachment. The high priesthood was now filled by Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas or Ananus; for the Roman governors, as has been said, since the expulsion of Archelaus, either in the capricious or venal wantonness of power, or from jealousy of his authority, had perpetually deposed and re-appointed this chief civil and religious magistrate of the nation. Caiaphas threw the weight of his official influence into the scale of the more decided and violent party; and endeavoured, as it were, to give an appearance of patriotism to the meditated crime, by declaring the expediency of sacrificing one life, even though innocent, for the welfare of the whole nation (1). His language was afterwards treasured in the memory of the Christians, as inadvertently prophetic of the more extensive benefits derived to mankind by the death of their Master. The death of Jesus was deliberately decreed; but Jesus

(1) John, xi. 47—53.

for the present avoided the gathering storm, withdrew from the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and retired to Ephraim, on the border of Judæa, near the wild and mountainous region which divided Judæa from Samaria (1).

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE LAST PASSEVER. — THE CRUCIFIXION.

Last Pass-  
over.

THE Passover rapidly approached; the roads from all quarters were already crowded with the assembling worshippers. It is difficult for those who are ignorant of the extraordinary power which local religious reverence holds over Southern and Asiatic nations, to imagine the state of Judæa and of Jerusalem at the time of this great periodical festival (2). The rolling onward of countless and gathering masses of population to some of the temples in India; the caravans from all quarters of the Eastern world, which assemble at Mecca during the Holy Season; the multitudes which formerly flowed to Loretto or Rome at the great ceremonies, when the Roman catholic religion held its unenfeebled sway over the mind of Europe—do not surpass, perhaps scarcely equal, the sudden, simultaneous confluence, not of the population of a single city, but of the whole Jewish nation, towards the capital of Judæa at the time of the Passover. Dispersed as they were throughout the world, it was not only the great mass of the inhabitants of Palestine, but many foreign Jews who thronged from every quarter—from Babylonia, from Arabia, from Egypt, from Asia Minor and Greece, from Italy, probably even from Gaul and Spain. Some notion of the density and vastness of the multitude may be formed from the calculation of Josephus, who, having ascertained the number of paschal lambs sacrificed on one of these solemn occasions, which amounted to 256,500 (3); and assigning the ordinary number to a company who could partake of the same victim, estimated the total number of the pilgrims and residents in Jerusalem at 2,700,000. Through all this concourse of the whole Jewish race, animated more or less profoundly, according to their peculiar temperament, with the same national and religious feelings, rumours about the appearance, the conduct, the pretensions, the language of Jesus, could not but have spread abroad, and be communicated with un-

(1) John, xi. 54.

(2) Μύριοι ἀπὸ μυρίων ὄσων πόλεων, οἱ μὲν διὰ γῆς, οἱ δὲ διὰ θαλάττης, ἐξ ἀνατολῆς καὶ δύσεως, καὶ ἀρκτου καὶ

μεσημερίας, καθ' ἑκάστην ἑορτὴν εἰς τὸ ἱερόν καταίρουσιν. Philo, de Monarch, 821.

(3) Or, according to Mr. Greswell's reading, 266,500.

checked rapidity. The utmost anxiety prevails throughout the whole crowded city and its neighbourhood, to ascertain whether this new prophet—this more, perhaps, than prophet—will, as it were, confront at this solemn period the assembled nation ; or, as on the last occasion, remain concealed in the remote parts of the country. The Sanhedrin are on their guard, and strict injunctions are issued that they may receive the earliest intelligence of his approach, in order that they may arrest him before he has attempted to make any impression on the multitude (1).

Already Jesus had either crossed the Jordan, or descended from the hill country to the north. He had passed through Jericho, where he had been recognised by two blind men as the Son of David, the title of the Messiah, probably the most prevalent among the common people ; and instead of disclaiming the homage, he had rewarded the avowal by the restoration of their sight to the suppliants (2).

On his way from Jericho to Jerusalem, but much nearer to the metropolis, he was hospitably received in the house of a wealthy publican named Zaccheus, who had been so impressed with the report of his extraordinary character, that, being of small stature, he had climbed a tree by the road-side to see him pass by ; and had evinced the sincerity of his belief in the just and generous principles of the new faith, both by giving up at once half of his property to the poor, and offering the amplest restitution to those whom he might have oppressed in the exercise of his function as a publican (3). It is probable that Jesus passed the night, perhaps the whole of the Sabbath, in the house of Zaccheus, and set forth, on the first day of the week, through the villages of Bethphage and Bethany to Jerusalem.

Let us, however, before we trace his progress, pause to ascertain, if possible, the actual state of feeling at this precise period, among the different ranks and orders of the Jews.

Jesus of Nazareth had now, for three years, assumed the character of a public teacher ; his wonderful works were generally acknowledged ; all no doubt considered him as an extraordinary being ; but whether he was the Messiah still, as it were, hung in the balance. His language, plain enough to those who could comprehend the real superiority, the real divinity of his character, was necessarily dark and ambiguous to those who were insensible to the moral beauty of his words and actions. Few, perhaps, beyond his more immediate followers, looked upon him with implicit faith ; many with doubt, even with hope ; perhaps still greater numbers, comprising the more turbulent of the lower class, and almost all

(1) John, xi. 55, 57.

(2) Matt. xx. 30. ; Mark, x. 46. ; Luke, xviii. (3) Luke, xix. 1—10.



the higher and more influential, with incredulity, if not with undisguised animosity. For, though thus for three years he had kept the public mind in suspense as to his being the promised Redeemer, of those circumstances to which the popular passions had looked forward as the only certain signs of the Messiah's coming; those, which among the mass of the community were considered inseparable from the commencement of the kingdom of heaven—the terrific, the awful, the national, not one had come to pass. The deliverance of the nation from the Roman yoke was as remote as ever; the governor had made but a short time, perhaps a year, before, a terrible assertion of his supremacy, by defiling the Temple itself with the blood of the rebellious or unoffending Galileans. The Sanhedrin, imperious during his absence, quailed and submitted whenever the tribunal of Pilate was erected in the metropolis. The publicans, those unwelcome remembrancers of the subjugation of the country, were still abroad in every town and village, levying the hateful tribute; and instead of joining in the popular clamour against these agents of a foreign rule, or even reprobating their extortions, Jesus had treated them with his accustomed equable gentleness; he had entered familiarly into their houses; one of his constant followers, one of his chosen twelve, was of this proscribed and odious profession.

All sects  
hostile to  
Jesus.

The Phari-  
sees.

Thus, then, the fierce and violent, the avowed or the secret partisans of the Galilean Judas, and all who without having enrolled themselves in his sect, inclined to the same opinions, if not already enflamed against Jesus, were at least ready to take fire, on the instant that his success might appear to endanger their schemes and visions of independence: and their fanaticism once inflamed, no considerations of humanity or justice would arrest its course, or assuage its violence. To every sect Jesus had been equally unpromising: to the Pharisees he had always proclaimed the most undisguised opposition; and if his language rises from its gentle and persuasive, though authoritative tone, it is ever in inveighing against the hypocrisy, the avarice, the secret vices of this class, whose dominion over the public mind it was necessary to shake with a strong hand; all communion with whose peculiar opinions it was incumbent on the Teacher of purer virtue to disclaim in the most unmeasured terms (1). But this hostility to the Pharisaic party was likely to operate unfavourably to the cause of Jesus, not only with the party itself, but with the great mass of the lower orders. If there be in man a natural love of independence both in thought and action, there is among the vulgar, especially in a nation so superstitious as the Jews, a reverence, even a passionate attachment to religious tyranny. The bondage in which the minute observances

(1) Luke, xi. 39—54.

of the traditionists, more like those of the Brahminical Indians than the free and more generous institutes of their Lawgiver, had fettered the whole life of the Jew, was nevertheless a source of satisfaction and pride; and the offer of deliverance from this inveterate slavery would be received by most with unthankfulness or suspicion. Nor can any teacher of religion, however he may appeal to the better feelings and to the reason, without endangering his influence over the common people, permit himself to be outdone in that austerity which they ever consider the sole test of fervour and sincerity. Even those less enslaved to the traditionary observances, the Lawyers (perhaps the religious ancestors of the Karaites) (1), who adhered more closely, and confined their precepts, to the sacred books, must have trembled and recoiled at the manner in which Jesus assumed an authority above that of Moses or the prophets. With the Sadducees Jesus had come less frequently into collision: it is probable that this sect prevailed chiefly among the aristocracy of the larger cities and the metropolis, while Jesus in general mingled with the lower order; and the Sadducees were less regular attendants in the synagogues and schools, where he was wont to deliver his instructions. They, in all likelihood, where less possessed than the rest of the nation with the expectation of the Messiah; at all events they rejected as innovations not merely the Babylonian notions about the angels and the resurrection, which prevailed in the rest of the community, but altogether disclaimed these doctrines, and professed themselves adherents of the original simple Mosaic Theocracy. Hence, though on one or two occasions they appear to have joined in the general confederacy to arrest his progress, the Sadducees in general would look on with contemptuous indifference; and although the declaration of eternal life mingled with the whole system of the teaching of Jesus, yet it was not till his resurrection had become the leading article of the new faith — till Christianity was thus, as it were, committed in irreconcilable hostility with the main principle of their creed — that their opposition took a more active turn; and from the accidental increase of their weight in the Sanhedrin, came into perpetual and terrible collision with the Apostles. The only point of union which the Sadducaic party would possess with the Pharisees would be the most extreme jealousy of the abrogation of the law, the exclusive feeling of its superior sanctity, wisdom, and irreparable authority: on this point the spirit of nationality would draw together these two conflicting parties, who would vie with each other in the patriotic, the religious vigilance with which they would seize on any expression of Jesus, which might imply the abroga-

The Law-  
yers.

The Sad-  
ducees.

(1) The Karaites among the later Jews were much earlier, though by no means numerous or influential; the protestants of Judaism (see Hist. of Jews); it is probable that a party of this nature existed

tion of the divinely inspired institutes of Moses, or even any material innovation on their strict letter. But, besides the general suspicion that Jesus was assuming an authority above, in some cases contrary to, the law, there were other trifling circumstances which threw doubts on that genuine and uncontaminated Judaism, which the nation in general would have imperiously demanded from their Messiah. There seems to have been some apprehension, as we have before stated, of his abandoning his ungrateful countrymen, and taking refuge among a foreign race; and his conduct towards the Samaritans was directly contrary to the strongest Jewish prejudices. On more than one instance, even if his remarkable conduct and language during his first journey through Samaria had not transpired, he had avowedly discountenanced that implacable national hatred, which no one can ever attempt to allay without diverting it, as it were, on his own head. He had adduced the example of a Samaritan as the only one of the ten lepers (1) who showed either gratitude to his benefactor, or piety to God; and in the exquisite apologue of the good Samaritan, he had placed the Priest and the Levite in a most unfavourable light, as contrasted with the descendant of that hated race.

Jesus the  
Messiah.

Yet there could be no doubt that he had already avowed himself to be the Messiah: his harbinger, the Baptist, had proclaimed the rapid, the instantaneous approach of the kingdom of Christ: of that kingdom Jesus himself had spoken as commencing, as having already commenced; but where were the outward, the visible, the undeniable signs of sovereignty? He had permitted himself, both in private and in public, to be saluted as the Son of David, an expression which was equivalent to a claim to the hereditary throne of David: but still to the common eye he appeared the same lowly and unroyal being, as when he first set forth as a teacher through the villages of Galilee. As to the nature of this kingdom, even to his closest followers, his language was most perplexing and contradictory. An unworldly kingdom, a moral dominion, a purely religious community, held together only by the bond of common faith, was so unlike the former intimate union of civil and religious polity—so diametrically opposite to the first principles of their Theocracy—as to be utterly unintelligible. The real nature and design of the new religion seemed altogether beyond their comprehension; and it is most remarkable to trace it, as it slowly dawned on the minds of the Apostles themselves, and gradually, after the death of Jesus, extended its horizon till it comprehended all mankind within its expanding view. To be in the highest sense the religious ancestors of mankind, to be the authors, or at least the agents, in the greatest moral revolution which has taken place in the world; to

(1) Luke, xvii. 18.



obtain an influence over the human mind, as much more extensive than that which had been violently obtained by the arms of Rome, as it was more conducive to the happiness of the human race; to be the teachers and disseminators of doctrines, opinions, sentiments, which slowly incorporating themselves, as it were, with the intimate essence of man's moral being, were to work a gradual but total change—a change which, as to the temporal as well as the eternal destiny of our race, to those who look forward to the simultaneous progress of human civilisation and the genuine religion of Jesus, is yet far from complete—all this was too high, too remote, too mysterious, for the narrow vision of the Jewish people. They, as a nation, were better prepared indeed, by already possessing the rudiments of the new faith, for becoming the willing agents in this divine work; on the other hand they were, in some respects, disqualified by that very distinction, which, by keeping them in rigid seclusion from the rest of mankind, had rendered them, as it were, the faithful depositaries of the great principle of religion, the Unity of God. The peculiar privilege, with which they had been entrusted for the benefit of mankind, had become, as it were, their exclusive property: nor were they willing, indiscriminately, to communicate to others this their own distinctive prerogative.

Those, for such doubtless there were, who pierced, though dimly, through the veil—the more reasoning, the more advanced, the more philosophical,—were little likely to espouse the cause of Jesus with vigour and resolution. Persons of this character are usually too calm, dispassionate, and speculative, to be the active and zealous instruments in a great religious revolution. It is probable that most of this class were either far gone in Oriental mysticism, or in some instances in the colder philosophy of the Greeks. For these Jesus was as much too plain and popular, as he was too gentle and peaceable for the turbulent. He was scarcely more congenial to the severe and ascetic practices of the Essene, than to the fiercer followers of the Galilean Judas. Though the Essene might admire the exquisite purity of his moral teaching, and the uncompromising firmness with which he repressed the vices of all ranks and parties; however he might be prepared for the abrogation of the ceremonial law and the substitution of the religion of the heart for that of the prevalent outward forms, on his side he was too closely bound by his own monastic rules: his whole existence was recluse and contemplative. His religion was so altogether unfitted for aggression, as, however apparently it might coincide with Christianity in some material points, in fact its vital system was repugnant to that of the new faith. Though, after strict investigation, the Essene would admit the numerous candidates who aspired to unite themselves with his cœnobitic society, in which no one, according to Pliny's expression, was born, but which was always

The Essenes.

full, he would never seek proselytes, or use any active means for disseminating his principles; and it is worthy of remark, that almost the only quarter of Palestine which Jesus does not appear to have visited, is the district near the Dead Sea, where the agricultural settlements of the Essenes were chiefly situated.

The Ru-  
lers.

While the mass of the community were hostile to Jesus, from his deficiency in the more imposing, the warlike, the destructive signs of the Messiah's power and glory; from his opposition to the genius and principles of the prevailing sects; from his want of nationality, both as regarded the civil independence and the exclusive religious superiority of the race of Abraham; and from their own general incapacity for comprehending the moral sublimity of his teaching; additional, and not less influential, motives, conspired to inflame the animosity of the Rulers. Independent of the dread of innovation, inseparable from established governments, they could not but discern the utter incompatibility of their own rule with that of an unworldly Messiah. They must abdicate at once, if not their civil office as magistrates, unquestionably their sovereignty over the public mind; retract much which they had been teaching on the authority of their fathers, the wise men; and submit, with the lowest and most ignorant, to be the humble scholars of the new Teacher. With all this mingled, no doubt, a real apprehension of offending the Roman power. They could not but discern on how precarious a foundation rested not only the feeble shadow of national independence, but even the national existence. A single mandate from the Emperor, not unlikely to be precipitately advised, and relentlessly carried into execution, on the least appearance of tumult, by a governor of so decided a character as Pontius Pilate, might annihilate at once all that remained of their civil, and even of their religious, constitution. If we look forward we find that, during the whole of the period which precedes the last Jewish war, the ruling authorities of the nation pursued the same cautious policy. They were driven into the insurrection, not by their own deliberate determination, but by the uncontrollable fanaticism of the populace. To every overture of peace they lent a willing ear; and their hopes of an honourable capitulation, by which the city might be spared the horrors of a storm, and the Temple be secured from desecration, did not expire, till their party was thinned by the remorseless sword of the Idumean and the assassin, and the Temple had become the stronghold of one of the contending factions. Religious fears might seem to countenance this trembling apprehension of the Roman power, for there is strong ground, both in Josephus and the Talmudic writings, for believing that the current interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel designated the Romans as the predestined destroyers of the Theocracy (1). And however the more enthu-

(1) It is probable that in the allusion of Jesus to the "abomination of desolation, the phrase

siastic might look upon this only as one of the inevitable calamities which was to precede the appearance and final triumph of the Messiah, the less fervid faith of the older and more influential party was far more profoundly impressed with the dread of the impending ruin, than elated with the remoter hope of final restoration. The advice of Caiaphas, therefore, to sacrifice even an innocent man for the safety of the state, would appear to them both sound and reasonable policy.

We must imagine this suspense, this agitation of the crowded city, or we shall be unable fully to enter into the beauty of the calm and unostentatious dignity with which Jesus pursues his course through the midst of this terrific tumult. He preserves the same equable composure in the triumphant procession into the Temple and in the Hall of Pilate. Every thing indicates his tranquil conviction of his inevitable death; he foretells it with all its afflicting circumstances to his disciples, incredulous almost to the last to this alone of their Master's declarations. At every step he feels himself more inextricably within the toils; yet he moves onwards with the self-command of a willing sacrifice, constantly dwelling with a profound, though chastened, melancholy on his approaching fate, and intimating that his death was necessary, in order to secure indescribable benefits for his faithful followers and for mankind. Yet there is no needless exasperation of his enemies; he observes the utmost prudence, though he seems so fully aware that his prudence can be of no avail; he never passes the night within the city; and it is only by the treachery of one of his followers that the Sanhedrin at length make themselves masters of his person.

The Son of Man had now arrived at Bethany, and we must endeavour to trace his future proceedings in a consecutive course (1); but if it has been difficult to dispose the events of the life of Jesus, in the order of time, this difficulty increases as we approach its termination. However embarrassing this fact to those who require something more than historical credibility in the evangelical narratives, to those who are content with a lower and more rational view of their authority, it throws not the least suspicion on their truth. It might almost seem, at the present period, that the Evangelists, confounded as it were, and stunned with the deep sense of the importance of the crisis, however they might remember the facts, had in some degree perplexed and confused their regular order. At Bethany he took up his abode in the house of Simon, who had

Demeanour of Jesus.

Difficulty of chronological arrangement.

Jesus at Bethany.

was already applied by the popular apprehensions to some impending destruction by the Romans.

Τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον Δανίηλος καὶ περὶ τῶν Ρωμαίων ἡγεμονίας ἀνέγραψε, καὶ ὅτι ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐρρημαθίσεται. Ant. x. 2. 7., and in the Bell. Jud. iv. 6. 3., the προφήτεια κατὰ τῆς πάτριδος, referred to his inter-

pretation of the verses of the prophet. Compare Babyl. Talm. Gemara, Masseck Nasir, c. 5., Masseck Sanhedrin, c. 11., Jerusalem Talmud, Masseck Kelaim. c. 9. Bertholdt on Daniel, p. 585. Compare likewise Jortin's Eccl. Hist. i. 69.

(1) Matt. xxi. 1.; Mark, xi. 1.; Luke, xix. 28.; John, xii. 1.



been a leper, and, it is not improbably conjectured, had been healed by the wonderful power of Jesus (1). Simon was, in all likelihood, closely connected, though the degree of relationship is not intimated, with the family of Lazarus, for Lazarus was present at the feast, and it was conducted by Martha his sister. The fervent devotion of their sister Mary had been already indicated on two occasions; and this passionate zeal, now heightened by gratitude for the recent restoration of her brother to life, evinced itself in her breaking an alabaster box of very costly perfume, and anointing his head (2), according, as we have seen on a former occasion, to a usage not uncommon in Oriental banquets. It is possible that vague thoughts of the royal character, which she expected that Jesus was about to assume, might mingle with those purer feelings which led her to pay this prodigal homage to his person. The mercenary character of Judas now begins to be developed. Judas had been appointed a kind of treasurer, and entrusted with the care of the common purse, from which the scanty necessities of the humble and temperate society had been defrayed, and the rest reserved for distribution among the poor. Some others of the disciples had been seized with astonishment at this unusual and seemingly unnecessary waste of so valuable a commodity: but Judas broke out into open remonstrance; and concealing his own avarice under the veil of charity for the poor, protested against the wanton prodigality. Jesus contented himself with praising the pious and affectionate devotion of the woman, and reverting to his usual tone of calm melancholy, declared that inadvertently she had performed a more pious office, the anointing his body for his burial.

Jesus enters Jerusalem in triumph.

The intelligence of the arrival of Jesus at Bethany spread rapidly to the city, from which it was not quite two miles distant. Multitudes thronged forth to behold him: nor was Jesus the only object of interest, for the fame of the resurrection of Lazarus was widely disseminated, and the strangers in Jerusalem were scarcely less anxious to behold a man who had undergone a fate so unprecedented.

Lazarus thus an object of intense interest to the people (3), became one of no less jealousy to the ruling authorities, the enemies of Jesus. His death was likewise decreed, and the magistracy only awaited a favourable opportunity for the execution of their edicts. But the Sanhedrin is at first obliged to remain in overawed and trembling inactivity. The popular sentiment is so decidedly in favour of Jesus of Nazareth, that they dare not venture to oppose his open, his public, his triumphant procession into the city, or his entrance amid the applauses of the wondering multitude into the

(1) Matt. xxvi. 1—13.; Mark, xiv. 3—9.; John, xii. 1—11. (We follow St. John's narrative in placing this incident at the present period).

(2) See Psalm, xxv. 5. Horat. Carm. ii. 11. 16. Martial, iii. 12. 4.

(3) John, xii. 9—11.

Temple itself. On the morning of the second day of the week (1), Jesus is seen, in the face of day, approaching one of the gates of the city which looked towards Mount Olivet (2). In avowed conformity to a celebrated prophecy of Zachariah, he appears riding on the yet unbroken colt of an ass ; the procession of his followers, as he descends the side of the Mount of Olives, escort him with royal honours, and with acclamations expressive of his title of the Messiah, towards the city : many of them had been witnesses of the resurrection of Lazarus, and no doubt proclaimed, as they advanced, this extraordinary instance of power. They are met (3) by another band advancing from the city, who receive him with equal homage, strew branches of palm and even their garments in his way ; and the Sanhedrin could not but hear within the courts of the Temple, the appalling proclamation, “ Hosannah, blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Some of the Pharisees, who had mingled with the multitude, remonstrate with Jesus, and command him to silence what to their ears sounded like the profane, the impious adulation of his partisans. Uninterrupted, and only answering that if these were silent, the stones on which he trod would bear witness, Jesus still advances ; the acclamations become yet louder ; he is hailed as the son of David, the rightful heir of David’s kingdom ; and the desponding Pharisees, alarmed at the complete mastery over the public mind which he appears to possess, withdraw for the present their fruitless opposition. On the declivity of the hill he pauses to behold the city at his feet, and something of that emotion, which afterwards is expressed with much greater fulness, betrays itself in a few brief and emphatic sentences, expressive of the future miserable destiny of the devoted Jerusalem (4).

Monday,  
Nisan 2,  
March.

The whole crowded city is excited by this increasing tumult ; anxious inquiries about the cause, and the intelligence that it is the entrance of Jesus of Nazareth into the city, still heighten the universal suspense (5) ; and even in the Temple itself, where perhaps the religion of the place, or the expectation, of some public declaration, or perhaps of some immediate sign of his power, had caused a temporary silence among his older followers, the children prolong the acclamations (6) ; and as the sick, the infirm, the afflicted with different maladies, are brought to him to be healed, and are restored at once to health or the use of their faculties, at every instance of the power and goodness of Jesus the same uncontrolled acclamations from the younger part of the multitude are renewed with increasing fervour.

Acclamations in  
the Temple.

Those of the Sanhedrin who are present, though they do not attempt at this immediate juncture to stem the torrent, venture to

(1) John, xii. 12.

(4) Luke, xix. 41—44.

(2) Matt. xxi. 1—10.; Mark, xi. 1—10.; Luke, xix. 29—40.; John, xii. 12—19.

(5) Matt. xxi. 10, 11.

(3) John, xii. 18.

(6) Ibid. 15.

remonstrate against the disrespect to the sanctity of the Temple, and demand of Jesus to silence, what to their feelings sounded like profane violation of the sacred edifice. Jesus replies, as usual, with an apt quotation from the sacred writings, which declared that even the voices of children and infants might be raised, without reproof, in praise and thanksgiving to God.

The  
Greeks.

Among the multitudes of Jews who assembled at the Passover, there were usually many proselytes who were called Greeks (1) (a term in Jewish language of as wide signification as that of barbarians with the Greeks, and including all who were not of Jewish descent). Some of this class, carried away by the general enthusiasm towards Jesus, expressed an anxious desire to be admitted to his presence. It is not improbable that these proselytes might be permitted to advance no further than the division in the outer Court of the Gentiles, where certain palisades were erected, with inscriptions in various languages, prohibiting the entrance of all foreigners; or even if they were allowed to pass this barrier, they may have been excluded from the court of Israel, into which Jesus may have passed. By the intervention of two of the Apostles, their desire is made known to Jesus; who, perhaps as he passes back through the outward court, permits them to approach. No doubt as these proselytes shared in the general excitement towards the person of Jesus, so they shared in the general expectation of the immediate, the instantaneous commencement of the splendour, the happiness of the Messiah's kingdom. To their surprise, either in answer to or anticipating their declaration to this effect, instead of enlarging on the glory of that great event, the somewhat ambiguous language of Jesus dwells, at first on his approaching fate, on the severe trial which awaits the devotion of his followers; yet on the necessity of this humiliation, this dissolution, to his final glory, and to the triumph of his beneficent religion. It rises at length into a devotional address to the Father, to bring immediately to accomplishment all his promises, for the glorification of the Messiah. As he was yet speaking, a rolling sound was heard in the heavens, which the unbelieving part of the multitude heard only as an accidental burst of thunder: to others, however, it seemed an audible, a distinct, or according to those who adhere to the strict letter, the articulate voice (2) of an angel, proclaiming the divine sanction to the presage of his future glory. Jesus continues his discourse in a tone of profounder mystery, yet evidently declaring the immediate discomfiture of the "Prince of this world," the adversary of the Jewish people and of the human race, his own departure from the world, and the important consequences which were to

(1) John, xii. 20. 43.

(2) Kuinoel in loco. Some revert to the Jewish superstition of the Bath-Kol, or audible voice

from heaven; but the more rational of the Jews interpret this Bath-Kol as an impression upon the mind, rather than on the outward senses.



ensue from that departure. After his death, his religion was to be more attractive than during his life. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Among the characteristics of the Messiah which were deeply-rooted in the general belief, was the eternity of his reign; once revealed, he was revealed for ever; once established in their glorious, their paradisiacal state, the people of God, the subjects of the kingdom, were to be liable to no change, no vicissitude. The allusions of Jesus to his departure, clashing with this notion of his perpetual presence, heightened their embarrassment; and, leaving them in this state of mysterious suspense, he withdrew unperceived from the multitude, and retired again with his own chosen disciples to the village of Bethany.

The second morning Jesus returned to Jerusalem. A fig-tree stood by the wayside, of that kind well known in Palestine, which during a mild winter preserve their leaves and with the early spring put forth and ripen their fruit (1). Jesus approached the tree to pluck the fruit; but finding that it bore none, condemned it to perpetual barrenness.

Cursing  
the barren  
fig tree.

This transaction is remarkable, as almost the only instance in which Jesus adopted that symbolic mode of teaching by action, rather than by language, so peculiar to the East, and so frequently exemplified in the earlier books, especially of the Prophets. For it is difficult to conceive any reason either for the incident itself, or for its admission into the evangelic narrative at a period so important unless it was believed to convey some profounder meaning. The close moral analogy, the accordance with the common phraseology between the barren tree, disqualified by its hardened and sapless state from bearing its natural produce, and the Jewish nation, equally incapable of bearing the fruits of Christian goodness, formed a most expressive, and, as it were, living apologue.

On this day, Jesus renews the remarkable scene which had taken place at the first Passover. The customary traffic, the tumult and confusion, which his authority had restrained for a short time, had been renewed in the courts of the Temple; and Jesus again expelled the traders from the holy precincts, and, to secure the silence and the sanctity of the whole enclosure, prohibited the carrying any vessel through the Temple courts (2). Through the whole of this day the Sanhedrin, as it were, rested on their arms; they found, with still increasing apprehension, that every hour the multitude crowded with more and more anxious interest around the Prophet of Nazareth; his authority over the Temple courts seems to have

Second  
day in Je-  
rusalem.

(1) There are three kinds of figs in Palestine: 1. the early fig, which blossoms in March, and ripens its fruit in June; 2. the Kerman, which shows its fruit in June, and ripens in August; and, 3. the kind in question. See Kuinoel, in

loco. Pliny. H. N. xvi. 27. Theophr. 3. 6. Shaw's Travels, Matt. xxi. 18, 19.; Mark, xi. 12. 14.

(2) Matt. xxi. 12. 13.; Luke, xix. 45. 46.; Mark, xi. 15. 17.

been admitted without resistance; and probably the assertion of the violated dignity of the Temple was a point on which the devotional feelings would have been so strongly in favour of the Reformer, that it would have been highly dangerous and unwise for the magistrates to risk even the appearance either of opposition or of dissatisfaction.

The third  
day.

The third morning arrived. As Jesus passed to the Temple, the fig-tree, the symbol of the Jewish nation, stood utterly withered and dried up. But, as it were, to prevent the obvious inference from the immediate fulfilment of his malediction,—almost the only destructive act during his whole public career, and that on a tree by the wayside, the common property,—Jesus mingles with his promise of power to his Apostles to perform acts as extraordinary, the strictest injunctions to the milder spirit inculcated by his precept and his example. Their prayers were to be for the forgiveness, not for the providential destruction, of their enemies.

Deputa-  
tion from  
the rulers.

The Sanhedrin had now determined on the necessity of making an effort to discredit Jesus with the more and more admiring multitude. A deputation arrives to demand by what authority he had taken up his station, and was daily teaching in the Temple, had expelled the traders, and, in short, had usurped a complete superiority over the accredited and established instructors of the people (1)? The self-command and promptitude of Jesus caught them, as it were, in their own toils, and reduced them to the utmost embarrassment. The claim of the Baptist to the prophetic character had been generally admitted and even passionately asserted; his death had, no doubt, still further endeared him to all who detested the Herodian rule, or who admired the uncompromising boldness with which he had condemned iniquity even upon the throne. The popular feeling would have resented an impeachment on his prophetic dignity. When, therefore, Jesus demanded their sentence as to the Baptism of John, they had but the alternative of acknowledging its divine sanction, and so tacitly condemning themselves for not having submitted to his authority, and even for not admitting his testimony in favour of Jesus; or of exposing themselves, by denying it, to popular insult and fury. The self-degrading confession of their ignorance, placed Jesus immediately on the vantage ground, and at once annulled their right to question or to decide upon the authority of his mission,—that right which was considered to be vested in the Sanhedrin. They were condemned to listen to language still more humiliating. In two striking parables, that of the Lord of the Vineyard, and of the Marriage Feast (2), Jesus not obscurely intimated the rejection of those labourers who had been first summoned to the work of God; of those guests who

(1) Matt. xxi. 23—27.; Mark, xi. 27—34.;

(2) Matt. xxi. 28. to xxii. 14.; Mark, xii. 1—12.; Luke, xx. 9—18.

had been first invited to the nuptial banquet; and the substitution of meaner and most unexpected guests or subjects in their place.

The fourth day (1) arrived; and once more Jesus appeared in the Temple with a still increasing concourse of followers. No unfavourable impression had yet been made on the popular mind by his adversaries; his career is yet unchecked; his authority unshaken. The fourth day.

His enemies are now fully aware of their own desperate situation; the apprehension of the progress of Jesus unites the most discordant parties into one formidable conspiracy; the Pharisaic, the Sadducaic, and the Herodian factions agree to make common cause against the common enemy: the two national sects, the Traditionists, and the Antitraditionists, no longer hesitate to accept the aid of the foreign or Herodian faction (2). Some suppose the Herodians to have been the officers and attendants on the court of Herod, then present at Jerusalem; but the appellation more probably includes all those who, estranged from the more inveterate Judaism of the nation, and having, in some degree, adopted Grecian habits and opinions, considered the peace of the country best secured by the government of the descendants of Herod, with the sanction and under the protection of Rome (3). They were the foreign faction, and as such, in general, in direct opposition to the Pharisaic, or national party. But the success of Jesus, however at present it threatened more immediately the ruling authorities in Jerusalem, could not but endanger the Galilean government of Herod. The object, therefore, was to implicate Jesus with the faction, or at least to tempt him into acknowledging opinions similar to those of the Galilean demagogue, a scheme the more likely to work on the jealousy of the Roman government, if it was at the last Passover that the apprehension of tumult among the Galilean strangers had justified, or appeared to justify, the massacre perpetrated by Pilate. The plot was laid with great subtlety; for either way Jesus, it appeared, must commit himself. The great test of the Galilean opinion was, the lawfulness of tribute to a foreign power; which Judas had boldly declared to be not merely a base compromise of the national independence, but an impious infringement on the first principles of their theocracy. But the independence, if not the

The Herodians.

(1) There is considerable difficulty in ascertaining the events of the Wednesday. It does not appear altogether probable that Jesus should have remained at Bethany in perfect inactivity or seclusion during the whole of this important day: either, therefore, as some suppose, the triumphant entry into Jerusalem took place on the Monday, not on the Sunday, according to the common tradition of the church; or, as here stated, the collision with his various adversaries spread over the succeeding day.

(2) Matt. xxii. 15—22.; Mark, xii. 13—17.; Luke, xxi. 19—26.

(3) Of all notions on the much-contested point of the Herodians, the most improbable is that which identifies them with the followers of the Galilean Judas. The whole policy of the Herodian family was in diametrical hostility to those opinions. They maintained their power by foreign influence, and, with the elder Herod, had systematically attempted to soften the implacable hostility of the nation by the introduction of Grecian manners. Their object accordingly was, to convict Jesus of the Galilean opinions, which they themselves held in the utmost detestation.



universal dominion of the Jews was inseparably bound up with the popular belief in the Messiah. Jesus, then, would either, on the question of the lawfulness of tribute to Cæsar, confirm the bolder doctrines of the Galilean, and so convict himself, before the Romans, as one of that dangerous faction; or he would admit its legality, and so annul at once all his claims to the character of the Messiah. Not in the least thrown off his guard by the artful courtesy, or rather the adulation of their address, Jesus appeals to the current coin of the country, which, bearing the impress of the Roman emperor, was in itself a recognition of Roman supremacy (1).

The Sadducees.

The Herodian or political party thus discomfited, the Sadducees advanced to the encounter. Nothing can appear more captious or frivolous than their question with regard to the future possession of a wife in another state of being, who had been successively married to seven brothers, according to the Levirate law. But, perhaps, considered in reference to the opinions of the time, it will seem less extraordinary. The Sadducees, no doubt, had heard that the resurrection and the life to come, had formed an essential tenet in the teaching of Jesus. They concluded that his notions on these subjects were those generally prevalent among the people. But, if the later Rabbinical notions of the happiness of the renewed state of existence, were current or even known in their general outline, nothing could be more gross or unspiritual (2) : if less voluptuous, they were certainly not less strange and unreasonable, than those which perhaps were derived from the same source—the Paradise of Mahomet. The Sadducees were accustomed to contend with these disputants, whose paradisaical state, to be established by the Messiah, after the resurrection, was but the completion of those temporal promises in the book of Deuteronomy, a perpetuity of plenty, fertility, and earthly enjoyment (3). The answer of Jesus, while it declares the certainty of another state of existence, carefully purifies it from all these corporeal and earthly images; and assimilates man, in another state of existence, to a higher order of beings. And in his concluding inference from the passage in Exodus, in which God is described as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the allusion may perhaps be still kept up. The temporal and corporeal resurrection of the common Pharisaic belief was to take place only after the coming of the Messiah; yet their reverence for the fathers of the race, would scarcely allow even the Sadducee to

(1) The latter part of the sentence, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," and "to God the things that are God's," refers, in all probability, to the payment of the Temple tribute, which was only received in the coin of the country. Hence, as before observed, the money changers in the temple, Matt., xxii. 23—33.; Mark, xii. 18—27.; Luke, xx. 27—38.

(2) It is decided, in the *Sohar* on Genesis, fol.

24, col. 96., "that woman, who has married two husbands in this world, is restored to the first in the world to come." Schoetgen in loco.

(3) Josephus, in his address to his countrymen, mingles up into one splendid picture the Metempsychosis and the Elysium of the Greeks. In Schoetgen, in loco, may be found extracts from the Talmud, of a purer character, and more resembling the language of our Lord.

suppose their total extinction. The actual, the pure beatitude of the Patriarchs, was probably an admitted point; if not formally decided by their teachers, implicitly admitted, and fervently embraced by the religious feelings of the whole people. But if, according to the Sadducaic principle, the soul did not exist independent of the body, even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had shared the common fate, the favour of God had ceased with their earthly dissolution; nor in the time of Moses could he be justly described as the God of those, who in death had sunk into utter annihilation.

Although now engaged in a common cause, the hostility of the Pharisaic party to the Sadducees, could not but derive gratification from their public discomfiture. One scribe of their party is so struck by the superiority of Jesus, that, though still with something of an insidious design, he demands in what manner he should rank the commandments, which in popular belief were probably of equal dignity and importance (1). But when Jesus comprises the whole of religion under the simple precepts of the love of God and the love of man, he is so struck with the sublimity of the language, that he does not hesitate openly to espouse his doctrines.

Paralysed by this desertion, and warned by the discomfiture of the two parties which had preceded them in dispute with Jesus, the Pharisees appear to have stood wavering and uncertain how to speak or act. Jesus seizes the opportunity of still further weakening their authority with the assembled multitude; and, in his turn, addresses an embarrassing question as to the descent of the Messiah (2). The Messiah, according to the universal belief, would be the heir and representative of David: Jesus, by a reference to the second Psalm, which was considered prophetic of the Redeemer, forces them to confess that, even according to their own authority, the kingdom of the Messiah was to be of far higher dignity, far wider extent, and administered by a more exalted sovereign than David, for even David himself, by their own admission, had called him his Lord.

The Pharisees.

The Pharisees withdrew in mortified silence, and for that time abandoned all hope of betraying him into any incautious or unpopular denial by their captious questions. But they withdrew unmoved by the wisdom, unattracted by the beauty, unsubdued by the authority of Jesus.

After some delay, during which the beautiful incident of his approving the charity of the poor widow (3), who cast her mite into the treasury of the Temple, took place, he addressed the wondering multitude, ("for common people heard him gladly") (4) in a grave and solemn denunciation against the tyranny, the hypo-

(1) Matt. xxii. 34—40.; Mark, xii. 28—40.; Luke. xx. 39, 40.

(3) Mark, xii. 41—44.; Luke xxi. 1—4.

(2) Matt. xxii. 41—46.; Mark, xii. 35—37.; Luke, xx. 39—44.

(4) "And the common people heard him gladly."

—Mark, xii. 37.

crisy, the bigoted attachment to the most minute observances, and at the same time the total blindness to the spirit of religion, which actuated that great predominant party. He declared them possessed with the same proud and inhuman spirit, which had perpetually bedewed the city with the blood of the Prophets (1). Jerusalem had thus for ever rejected the mercy of God.

This appalling condemnation was, as it were, the final declaration of war against the prevailing religion; it declared that the new doctrines could not harmonise with minds so inveterately wedded to their own narrow bigotry; but even yet the people were not altogether estranged from Jesus, and in that class in which the Pharisaic interest had hitherto despotically ruled, it appeared as it were trembling for its existence.

The crisis,  
in the fate  
of Jesus.

And now every thing indicated the approaching, the immediate crisis. Although the populace were so decidedly, up to the present instant, in his favour,—though many of the ruling party were only withholden by the dread of that awful sentence of excommunication, which inflicted civil, almost religious death (2), from avowing themselves his disciples,—yet Jesus never entered the Temple again: the next time he appeared before the people, was as a prisoner, as a condemned malefactor. As he left the Temple, a casual expression of admiration from some of his followers, at the magnificence and solidity of the building, and the immense size of the stones of which it was formed, called forth a prediction of its impending ruin; which was expanded, to four of his Apostles, into a more detailed and circumstantial description of its appalling fate, as he sat, during the evening upon the Mount of Olives (3).

Jesus on  
the mount  
of Olives.

Evening  
view of  
Jerusalem  
and the  
Temple.

It is impossible to conceive a spectacle of greater natural or moral sublimity, than the Saviour seated on the slope of the Mount of Olives, and thus looking down, almost for the last time, on the whole Temple and city of Jerusalem, crowded as it then was with near three millions of worshippers. It was evening, and the whole irregular outline of the city, rising from the deep glens, which encircled it on all sides, might be distinctly traced. The sun, the significant emblem of the great Fountain of moral light, to which Jesus and his faith had been perpetually compared, may be imagined sinking behind the western hills, while its last rays might linger on the broad and massy fortifications on Mount Sion, on the stately palace of Herod, on the square tower, the Antonia, at the corner of the Temple, and on the roof of the Temple, fretted all over with golden spikes, which glittered like fire; while below, the colonnades and lofty gates would cast their broad shadows over the courts, and afford that striking contrast between vast masses of gloom, and

(1) Matt., xxiii.; Mark, xii. 38—40.; Luke, xx. 45—47.

(3) Matt. xxiv. xxv.; Mark, xiii. Luke, xxi. 5—38

(2) See *His. of the Jews*, vol. iii. p. 141—147.



gleams of the richest light, which only an evening scene, like the present, can display. Nor, indeed, (even without the sacred and solemna associations connected with the holy city,) would it be easy to conceive any natural situation in the world of more impressive grandeur, or likely to be seen with greater advantage under the influence of such accessaries, than that of Jerusalem, seated, as it was, upon hills of irregular height, intersected by bold ravines, and hemmed in almost on all sides by still loftier mountains, and itself formed, in its most conspicuous parts, of gorgeous ranges of Eastern architecture, in all its lightness, luxuriance, and variety. The effect may have been heightened by the rising of the slow volumes of smoke from the evening sacrifices, while even at the distance of the slope of Mount Olivet, the silence may have been faintly broken by the hymns of the worshippers.

Yet the fall of that splendid edifice was inevitable; the total demolition of all those magnificent and time-hallowed structures might not be averted. It was necessary to the complete development of the designs of Almighty Providence for the welfare of mankind in the promulgation of Christianity. Independent of all other reasons, the destruction certainly of the Temple, and if not of the city, at least of the city as the centre and metropolis of a people, the only true and exclusive worshippers of the one Almighty Creator, seemed essential to the progress of the new faith. The universal and comprehensive religion to be promulgated by Christ and his Apostles, was grounded on the abrogation of all local claims to peculiar sanctity, of all distinctions of one nation above another, as possessing any especial privilege in the knowledge or favour of the Deity. The time was come when “neither in Jerusalem nor on the mountain of Gerizim,” was the great Universal Spirit to be worshipped with circumscribed or local homage. As long, however, as the Temple on Mount Moriah remained hallowed by the reverence of ages, sanctified, according to the general belief, for perpetuity, by the especial command of God, as his peculiar dwelling-place; so long, among the Jews at least, and even among other nations, the true principle of Christian worship might be counteracted by the notion of the inalienable sanctity of this one place. Judaism would scarcely be entirely annulled, as long as the Temple rose in its original majesty and veneration.

Yet, notwithstanding this absolute necessity for its destruction, notwithstanding that it thus stood, as it were, in the way of the progress of human improvement and salvation, the Son of Man does not contemplate its ruin without emotion. And in all the superhuman beauty of the character of Jesus, nothing is more affecting and impressive, than the profound melancholy with which he foretels the future desolation of the city, which, before two days were passed, was to reek with his own blood. Nor should we do

Necessity  
for the  
destruction  
of the  
Temple at  
Jerusalem.

Jesus con-  
templates  
with sad-  
ness the  
future  
ruin of  
Jerusalem.

justice to this most remarkable incident in his life, if we should consider it merely as a sudden emotion of compassion, as the natural sensation of sadness at the decay or dissolution of that which has long worn the aspect of human grandeur. It seems rather a wise and far-sighted consideration, not merely of the approaching guilt and future penal doom of the city, but of the remoter moral causes, which, by forming the national character, influence the national destiny; the long train of events, the wonderful combination of circumstances, which had gradually wrought the Jewish people to that sterner frame of mind, which was about to display itself with such barbarous, such fatal ferocity. Jesus might seem not merely to know what was in man, but how it entered into man's heart and mind. His was divine charity, enlightened by infinite wisdom.

The ruin  
of the Jews  
the conse-  
quence of  
their  
character.

In fact, there was an intimate moral connection between the murder of Jesus and the doom of the Jewish city. It was the same national temperament, the same characteristic disposition of the people, which now morally disqualified them "from knowing," in the language of Christ, "the things which belonged unto their peace," which forty years afterwards committed them in their deadly and ruinous struggle with the masters of the world. Christianity alone could have subdued or mitigated that stubborn fanaticism, which drove them at length to their desperate collision with the arms of Rome. As Christians, the Jewish people might have subsided into peaceful subjects of the universal empire. They might have lived, as the Christians did, with the high and inalienable consolations of faith and hope under the heaviest oppressions; and calmly awaited the time when their holier and more beneficent ambition might be gratified by the submission of their rulers to the religious dominion founded by Christ and his Apostles. They would have slowly won that victory by the patient heroism of martyrdom, and the steady perseverance in the dissemination of their faith, which it was madness to hope that they could ever obtain by force of arms. As Jews, they were almost sure, sooner or later, to provoke the implacable vengeance of their foreign rulers. The same vision of worldly dominion, the same obstinate expectation of a temporal Deliverer, which made them unable to comprehend the nature of the redemption to be wrought by the presence, and the kingdom to be established by the power, of Christ, continued to the end to mingle with their wild and frantic resistance.

Immediate  
causes of  
the rejection  
of  
Jesus by  
the Jews.

In the rejection and murder of Jesus, the Rulers, as their interests and authority were more immediately endangered, were more deeply implicated than the people; but unless the mass of the people had been blinded by these false notions of the Messiah, they would not have demanded, or at least, with the general voice, assented to the sacrifice of Jesus. The progress of Jesus at the

present period in the public estimation, his transient popularity, arose from the enforced admiration of his commanding demeanour, the notoriety of his wonderful works, perhaps, for such language is always acceptable to the common ear, from his bold animadversions on the existing authorities; but it was no doubt supported in the mass of the populace by a hope, that even yet he would conform to the popular views of the Messiah's character. Their present brief access of faith would not have stood long against the continued disappointment of that hope : and it was no doubt by working on the reaction of this powerful feeling, that the Sanhedrin were able so suddenly, and, it almost appears, so entirely, to change the prevailing sentiment. Whatever the proverbial versatility of the popular mind, there must have been some chord strung to the most sensitive pitch, the slightest touch of which would vibrate through the whole frame of society, and madden at least a commanding majority to their blind concurrence in this revolting iniquity. Thus in the Jewish nation, but more especially in the prime movers, the Rulers and the heads of the Pharisaic party, the murder of Jesus was an act of unmitigated cruelty, but, as we have said, it arose out of the generally fierce and bigoted spirit, which morally incapacitated the whole people from discerning the evidence of his mission from heaven, in his acts of divine goodness, as well as of divine power. It was an act of religious fanaticism; they thought, in the language of Jesus himself, that they were "doing God service" when they slew the Master, as much as afterwards when they persecuted his followers.

When however the last, and as far as the existence of the nation, the most fatal display of this fanaticism took place, it was accidentally allied with nobler motives, with generous impatience of oppression, and the patriotic desire of national independence. However desperate and frantic the struggle against such irresistible power, the unprecedented tyranny of the later Roman procurators, Festus, Albinus, and Florus, might almost have justified the prudence of manly and resolute insurrection. Yet in its spirit and origin it was the same; and it is well known that even to the last, during the most sanguinary and licentious tumults in the Temple as well as the city, they never entirely lost sight of a deliverance from Heaven : God, they yet thought, would interpose in behalf of his chosen people. In short, the same moral state of the people (for the Rulers for obvious reasons were less forward in the resistance to the Romans), the same temperament and disposition now led them to reject Jesus and demand the release of Barabbas, which, forty years later, provoked the unrelenting vengeance of Titus, and deluged their streets with the blood of their own citizens. Even after the death of Jesus, this spirit might have been allayed, but only by a complete abandonment of all the motives



which led to his crucifixion—by the general reception of Christianity in all its meekness, humility, and purity—by the tardy substitution of the hope of a moral, for that of temporal dominion. This unhappily was not the case : but it must be left to Jewish history to relate how the circumstances of the times, instead of assuaging or subduing, exasperated the people into madness ; instead of predisposing to Christianity, confirmed the inveterate Judaism, and led at length to the accomplishment of their anticipated doom.

Altogether, then, it is evident, that it was this brooding hope of sovereignty, at least of political independence, moulded up with religious enthusiasm, and lurking, as it were, in the very heart's core of the people, which rendered it impossible that the pure, the gentle, the humane, the unworldly and comprehensive, doctrines of Jesus should be generally received, or his character appreciated by a nation in that temper of mind ; and the nation who could thus incur the guilt of his death, were prepared to precipitate themselves to such a fate, as at length it suffered.

Distinctness with which Jesus prophesied the fall of Jerusalem.

Hence political sagacity might, perhaps, have anticipated the crisis, which could only be averted, by that which was morally impossible, the simultaneous conversion of the whole people to Christianity. Yet the distinctness, the minuteness, the circumstantial accuracy, with which the prophetic outline of the siege and fall of Jerusalem is drawn, bear, perhaps, greater evidence of more than human foreknowledge, than any other in the sacred volume : and in fact this profound and far-sighted wisdom, this anticipation of the remote political consequences of the reception or rejection of his doctrines, supposing Jesus but an ordinary human being, would be scarcely less extraordinary than prophecy itself.

Embarrassment of the Sanhedrin.

Still though determined, at all hazards, to suppress the growing party of Jesus, the Sanhedrin were greatly embarrassed as to their course of proceeding. Jesus invariably passed the night without the walls, and only appeared during the daytime, though with the utmost publicity, in the Temple. His seizure in the Temple, especially during the festival, would almost inevitably lead to tumult, and (since it was yet doubtful on which side the populace would array themselves) tumult as inevitably to the prompt interference of the Roman authority. The Procurator, on the slightest indication of disturbance, without inquiring into the guilt or innocence of either party, might coerce both with equal severity ; or, even without further examination, let loose the guard, always mounted in the gallery which connected the fortress of Antonia with the north-western corner of the Temple, to mow down both the conflicting parties in indiscriminate havoc. He might thus mingle the blood of all present, as he had done that of the Galileans, with the sacrificial offerings. To discover then where Jesus might

be arrested without commotion or resistance from his followers, so reasonably to be apprehended, the treachery of one of his more immediate disciples was absolutely necessary ; yet this was an event, considering the commanding influence possessed by Jesus over his followers, rather to be desired than expected.

On a sudden, however, appeared within their court one of the chosen Twelve, with a voluntary offer of assisting them in the apprehension of his Master (1). Much ingenuity has been displayed by some recent writers in attempting to palliate, or rather to account, for this extraordinary conduct of Judas ; but the language in which Jesus spake of the crime, appears to confirm the common opinion of its enormity. It has been suggested, either that Judas might expect Jesus to put forth his power, even after his apprehension, to elude or to escape from his enemies, and thus his avarice might calculate on securing the reward without being an accomplice in absolute murder, at once betraying his Master and defrauding his employers. According to others still higher motives may have mingled with his love of gain : he may have supposed, that by thus involving Jesus in difficulties otherwise inextricable, he would leave him only the alternative of declaring himself openly and authoritatively to be the Messiah, and so force him to the tardy accomplishment of the ambitious visions of his partisans. It is possible that the traitor may not have contemplated, or may not have permitted himself clearly to contemplate, the ultimate consequences of his crime : he may have indulged the vague hope, that if Jesus were really the Messiah, he bore, if we may venture the expression, “ a charmed life,” and was safe in his inherent immortality (a notion in all likelihood inseparable from that of the Deliverer), from the malice of his enemies. If he were not, the crime of his betrayal would not be of very great importance. There were other motives which would concur with the avarice of Judas ; the rebuke which he had received when he expostulated about the waste of the ointment, if it had not excited any feeling of exasperation against his Master, at least showed that his character was fully understood by him. He must have felt himself out of his element among the more honest and sincere disciples ; nor can he have been actuated by any real or profound veneration for the exquisite perfection of a character so opposite to his own : and thus insincere and doubting, he may have shrunk from the approaching crisis, and as he would seize any means of extricating himself from that cause which had now become so full of danger, his covetousness would direct him to those means which would at once secure his own personal safety, and obtain the price, the thirty pieces of silver (2), set by public proclamation, on the head of Jesus.

(1) Matt. xxvi. 14—16. ; Merk. xiv. 10—11. ; Luke, xxii. 2—6.

(2) The thirty pieces of silver (shekels) are estimated at 3*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.* of our present money. It

Nor is the desperate access of remorse, which led to the public restitution of the reward, and to the suicide of the traitor, irreconcilable with the unmitigated heinousness of the treachery. Men meditate a crime, of which the actual perpetration overwhelms them with horror. The general detestation, of which, no doubt, Judas could not but be conscious, not merely among his former companions, the followers of Jesus, but even among the multitude; the supercilious coldness of the Sanhedrin, who having employed him as their instrument, treat his recantation with the most contemptuous indifference, might overstrain the firmest, and work upon the basest mind : and even the unexampled sufferings, and tranquil endurance of Jesus, however he may have calmly surveyed them when distant, and softened and subdued by his imagination, when present to his mind in their fearful reality, forced by the busy tongue of rumour upon his ears, perhaps not concealed from his sight, might drive him to desperation, little short of insanity (1).

The Pass-  
over.

It was on the last evening (2) but one before the death of Jesus that the fatal compact was made : the next day, the last of his life, Jesus determines on returning to the city to celebrate the Feast of the Passover : his disciples are sent to occupy a room prepared for the purpose (3). His conduct and language before and during the whole repast clearly indicate his preparation for inevitable death (4). His washing the feet of the disciples, his prediction of his betrayal, his intimation to Judas that he is fully aware of his design, his quiet dismissal of the traitor from the assembly, his institution of the second characteristic ordinance of the new religion, his allusions in that rite to the breaking of his body, and the pouring forth of his blood, his prediction of the denial of Peter, his final address to his followers, and his prayer before he left the chamber, are all deeply impregnated with the solemn melancholy, yet calm and unalterable composure, with which he looks forward to all the terrible details

The Last  
Supper.

was the sum named in the law (Exod. xxi. 32.), as the value of the life of a slave; and it has been supposed that the Sanhedrin were desirous of showing their contempt for Jesus by the mean price that they offered for his head.

Perhaps, when we are embarrassed at the smallness of the sum covenanted for and received by Judas, we are imperceptibly influenced by our own sense of the incalculable importance of those consequences which arose out of the treachery of Judas. The service which he performed for this sum was, after all, no more than giving information as to the time and place in which Jesus might be seized among a few disciples without fear of popular tumult, conducting their officers to the spot where he might be found, and designating his person when they arrived at that spot.

(1) Matt. xxvi. 17—29.; Mark, xiv. 12—25.; Luke, vii. 38.; John, xiii. to end of xvii.

(2) After two days was the Passover, in Jewish phraseology implies on the second day after.

(3) All houses, according to Josephus, were freely open to strangers during the Passover, no

payment was received for lodging. The Talmudic writings confirm this :—"The master of the family received the skins of sacrifice. It is a custom that a man leave his earthen jug, and also the skin of his sacrifices to his host." The Gloss. The inhabitants did not let out their houses at a price to them that came up to the feasts, but granted them to them gratis. Light-foot, vol. x. 44.

(4) Of all difficulties, that concerning which we arrive at the least satisfactory conclusion, is the apparent anticipation of the Passover by Christ. The fact is clear that Jesus celebrated the Passover on the Thursday, the leading Jews on the Friday; the historical evidence of this in the Gospels is unanswerable, independent of all theological reasoning. The reason of this difference is and must, we conceive, remain undecided. Whether it was an act of supreme authority assumed by Jesus, whether there was any schism about the right day, whether that schism was between the Pharisaic and Anti-Pharisaic party, or between the Jews and Galileans, all is purely conjectural.



of his approaching, his almost immediate, sufferings. To his followers he makes, as it were, the valedictory promise, that his religion would not expire at his death, that his place would be filled by a mysterious Comforter, who was to teach, to guide, to console.

This calm assurance of approaching death in Jesus is the more striking when contrasted with the inveterately Jewish notions of the Messiah's kingdom, which even yet possess the minds of the Apostles. They are now fiercely contesting (1) for their superiority in that earthly dominion, which even yet they suppose on the eve of its commencement. Nor does Jesus at this time altogether correct these erroneous notions, but in some degree falls into the prevailing language, to assure them of the distinguished reward which awaited his more faithful disciples. After inculcating the utmost humility by an allusion to the lowly fraternal service which he had just before performed in washing their feet, he describes the happiness and glory which they are at length to attain, by the strong, and no doubt familiar, imagery, of their being seated on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The festival was closed according to the usage with the second part of the Hallel (2), the Psalms, from the 113th to the 118th inclusive, of which the former were customarily sung at the commencement, the latter at the end, of the paschal supper. Jesus with his disciples again departed from the room in the city (3) where the feast had been held, probably down the street of the Temple, till they came to the valley : they crossed the brook of Kidron, and began to ascend the slope of the Mount of Olives. Within the city no open space was left for gardens (4) ; but the whole neighbourhood of Jerusalem was laid out in inclosures for the convenience and enjoyment of the inhabitants. The historian of the war relates, not without feelings of poignant sorrow, the havock made among these peaceful retreats by the devastating approaches of the Roman army (5). Jesus turned aside into one of these inclosures (6), which, it should seem from the subsequent history, was a place of customary retreat, well-known to his immediate followers. The early hours of the night were passed by him in retired and devotional meditation, while the weary disciples are overpowered by involuntary slumber. Thrice Jesus returns to them, and each time he finds them sleeping. But to him it was no hour of quiet or repose. In the solitary garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, who in public, though confronting danger and suffering neither with stoical indifference,

Jesus in  
the garden  
of Gethse-  
mane.

(1) Luke, xxii. 24—30.

(2) Buxtorf, *Lex Talmudica*, p. 613. Lightfoot in loco.

(3) Matt. xxvi. 30—56.; Mark, xiv. 32—52.; Luke, xxii. 39—53.; John, xviii. 1.

(4) Lightfoot's derivations of some of the

places on Mount Olivet are curious :—Beth-hana the place of dates ; Beth-phage the place of green figs ; Geth-semene the place of oil presses.

(5) *Hist. of the Jews*, iii. 13.

(6) Matt. xxvi. 36—46.; Mark, xiv. 32—42.; Luke, xxii. 41—46.; John, xviii. 1.

nor with the effort of a strong mind working itself up to the highest moral courage, but with a settled dignity, a calm and natural superiority, now, as it were, endured the last struggle of human nature. The whole scene of his approaching trial, his inevitable death, is present to his mind, and for an instant he prays to the Almighty Father to release him from the task, which, however of such importance to the welfare of mankind, is to be accomplished by such fearful means. The next instant, however, the momentary weakness is subdued, and though the agony is so severe that the sweat falls like large drops of blood to the ground, resigns himself at once to the will of God. Nothing can heighten the terrors of the coming scene so much, as its effect, in anticipation, on the mind of Jesus himself.

Betrayal  
of Jesus.

The devotions of Jesus and the slumbers of his followers, as midnight approached, were rudely interrupted. Jesus had rejoined his, now awakened, disciples for the last time; he had commanded them to rise, and be prepared for the terrible event. Still, no doubt, incredulous of the sad predictions of their Master—still supposing that his unbounded power would secure him from any attempt of his enemies, they beheld the garden filled with armed men, and gleaming with lamps and torches (1). Judas advances and makes the signal which had been agreed on, saluting his Master with the customary mark of respect, a kiss on the cheek, for which he receives the calm but severe rebuke of Jesus for thus treacherously abusing this mark of familiarity and attachment: “Judas, betrayest thou the son of Man with a kiss?” The tranquil dignity of Jesus overawed the soldiers who first approached; they were most likely ignorant of the service on which they were employed; and when Jesus announces himself as the object of their search, they shrink back in astonishment, and fall to the earth. Jesus however, covenanting only for the safe dismissal of his followers, readily surrenders himself to the guard. The fiery indignation of Peter, who had drawn his sword, and endeavoured, at least by his example, to incite the few adherents of Jesus to resistance, is repressed by the command of his Master: his peaceful religion disclaims all alliance with the acts or the weapons of the violent. The man (2) whose ear had been struck off, was instantaneously healed; and Jesus, with no more than a brief and calm remonstrance against this ignominious treatment, against this arrestation, not in the face of day, in the public Temple, but at night, and with arms in their hands, as though he had been a robber, allows himself to be led back, without resistance, into the city. His panic-stricken followers disperse on all sides, and Jesus is left forsaken and alone, amid his mortal enemies.

Jesus led  
prisoner  
to the city.

(1) Matt. xxvi. 47—56.; Mark, xiv. 43—50.; Luke, xxii. 47—53.; John, xviii. 2—11.

(2) It is a curious observation of Semler, that St. John alone gives the name of the servant of

the High Priest, Malchus; and John, it appears, was known to some of the household of the chief magistrate.

The caprice, the jealousy, or the prudence, of the Roman government, we have before observed, had in no point so frequently violated the feelings of the subject nation, as in the deposition of the High Priest, and the appointment of a successor to the office, in whom they might hope to place more implicit confidence. The stubbornness of the people, revolted by this wanton insult, persisted in honouring with the title those whom they could not maintain in the post of authority ; all who had borne the office retained, in common language, the appellation of High Priest, if indeed the appellation was not still more loosely applied. Probably the most influential man in Jerusalem at this time was Annas, or Ananus, four of whose sons in turn either had been, or were subsequently, elevated to that high dignity, now filled by his son-in-law, Caiaphas.

The High Priest.

The house of Annas was the first place (1) to which Jesus was led, either that the guard might receive further instructions, or perhaps as the place of the greatest security, while the Sanhedrin was hastily summoned to meet at that untimely hour, towards midnight or soon after in the house of Caiaphas. Before the houses of the more wealthy in the East, or rather within the outer porch, there is usually a large square open court, in which public business is transacted, particularly by those who fill official stations. Into such a court, before the palace of Caiaphas, Jesus was led by the soldiers, and Peter following unnoticed amid the throng, lingered before the porch until John, who happened to be familiarly known to some of the High Priest's servants, obtained permission for his entrance (2).

House of Annas.

The first process seems to have been a private examination (3), perhaps while the rest of the Sanhedrin were assembling, before the High Priest. He demanded of Jesus the nature of his doctrines, and the character of his disciples. Jesus appealed to the publicity of his teaching, and referred him to his hearers for an account of the tenets which he had advanced. He had no secret doctrines, either of tumult or sedition ; he had ever spoken “ in public, in the synagogue, or in the Temple.” And now the fearful scene of personal insult and violence began. An officer of the High Priest, enraged at the calm composure with which Jesus answered the interrogatory, struck him on the mouth ( beating on the mouth, sometimes with the hand, more often with a thong of leather or a slipper, is still a common act of violence in the East ) (4). He bore the insult with the same equable placidity :—“ If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil ; but if well, why smitest thou me ? ” The more formal arraignment began (5) : and, however hurried and tumultuous the

First interrogatory

Second more public interrogatory.

(1) John, xviii. 12—14.

(2) Ibid. 15—19.

(3) Matt. xxvi. 57. ; Mark, xiv. 55—64. ; Luke. Luke, xxii. 66—71 ; John, xiii. 19—24. xxii. 54.

(4) John, xviii. 20—24.

(5) Matt. xxvi. 59—66. ; Mark, xiv. 55—64.



meeting, the Sanhedrin, either desirous that their proceedings should be conducted with regularity, or, more likely, strictly fettered by the established rules of their court, perhaps by no means unanimous in their sentiments, were, after all, in the utmost embarrassment how to obtain a legal capital conviction. Witnesses were summoned, but the immutable principles of the Law, and the invariable practice of the tribunal, required, on every case of life and death, the agreement of two witnesses on some specific charge. Many were at hand, suborned by the enemies of Jesus and hesitating at no falsehood; but their testimony was so confused, or bore so little on any capital charge, that the court was still further perplexed. At length two witnesses deposed to the misapprehended speech of Jesus, at his first visit to Jerusalem, relating to the destruction of the Temple. But even their depositions were so contradictory, that it was scarcely possible to venture on a conviction upon such loose and incoherent statements. Jesus, in the meantime, preserved a tranquil and total silence. He neither interrupted nor questioned the witnesses, he did not condescend to place himself upon his defence. Nothing, therefore, remained (1) but to question the prisoner, and, if possible, to betray him into criminating himself. The High Priest, rising to give greater energy to his address, and adjuring him in the most solemn manner, in the name of God, to answer the truth, demands whether he is indeed the Messiah, the Christ, the son of the Living God. Jesus at once answers in the affirmative, and adds a distinct allusion to the prediction of Daniel (2), then universally admitted to refer to the reign of the Messiah. His words may be thus paraphrased: — “Ye shall know me for that mighty King described by the prophet; ye shall know me when my great, eternal, and imperishable kingdom shall be established on the ruins of your Theocracy.”

Jesus acknowledges himself the Messiah.

Conduct of the High Priest.

The secret joy of the High Priest, though perhaps his devout horror was not altogether insincere, was disguised by the tone and gesture of religious indignation which he assumed. He rent his clothes; an act considered indecorous, almost indecent, in the High Priest, unless justified by an outrage against the established religion so flagrant and offensive as this declaration of Jesus (3). He pronounced his speech (strangely indeed did its lofty tone contrast with the appearance of the prisoner) to be direct and treasonable blasphemy. The whole court, either sharing in the indignation, or

(1) Some have supposed that there were two examinations in different places before the Sanhedrin, one more private in the house of Caiaphas, another more public, in the Gazith, the chamber in the temple where the Sanhedrin usually sat. But the account of St. John, the most particular of the whole, says expressly (xviii. 28.), that he was carried directly from the house of Caiaphas to the Prætorium of Pilate.

(2) The allusion to this prophecy (Dan. vii. 13, 14.) is manifest.

(3) They who judge a blasphemer, first bid the witness to speak out plainly what he hath heard; and when he speaks it, the judges, standing on their feet, rend their garments, and do not sew them up again. Sanhed. i. 7. 10., and Babyl. Gemar., in loc.

The High Priest was forbidden to rend his garments in the case of private mourning for the dead. Lev. x. 6., xxi. 10. In the time of public calamity he did. 1 Mac. xi. 71. Joseph B. J. ii. 26, 27.

hurried away by the vehement gesture and commanding influence, of the High Priest, hastily passed the fatal sentence, and declared Jesus guilty of the capital crime.

The insolent soldiery (as he was withdrawn from the court) had now full licence, and perhaps more than the licence, of their superiors to indulge the brutality of their own dispositions. They began to spit on his face—in the East the most degrading insult; they blind-folded him, and struck him with the palms of their hands, and, in their miserable merriment, commanded him to display his prophetic knowledge, by detecting the hand that was raised against him (1).

Jesus insulted by the soldiery.

The dismay, the despair, which had seized upon his adherents, is most strongly exemplified by the denial of Peter. The zealous disciple, after he had obtained admittance into the hall, stood warming himself, in the cool of the dawning morning, probably by a kind of brazier (2). He was first accosted by a female servant, who charged him with being an accomplice of the prisoner: Peter denied the charge with vehemence, and retired to the portico or porch in front of the palace. A second time, another female renewed the accusation: with still more angry protestations Peter disclaimed all connection with his master; and once, but unregarded, the cock crew. An hour afterwards, probably about this time, after the formal condemnation, the charge was renewed by a relation of the man whose ear he had cut off. His harsh Galilean pronunciation had betrayed him as coming from that province; but Peter now resolutely confirmed his denial with an oath. It was the usual time of the second cock-crowing, and again it was distinctly heard. Jesus, who was probably at that time in the outer hall or porch in the midst of the insulting soldiery, turned his face towards Peter, who, overwhelmed with shame and distress, hastily retreated from the sight of his deserted master, and wept the bitter tears of self-reproach and humiliation.

Denial of Peter.

But, although the Sanhedrin had thus passed their sentence, there remained a serious obstacle before it could be carried into execution. On the contested point, whether the Jews, under the Roman government, possessed the power of life and death (3), it is not easy to state the question with brevity and distinctness. Notwithstanding the apparently clear and distinct recognition of the Sanhedrin, that they had not authority to put any man to death (4); notwithstanding the remarkable concurrence of Rabbinical tradition with this declaration, which asserts that the nation had been

Question of the right of the Sanhedrin to inflict capital punishment.

(1) Matt. xxvi. 67, 68.; Mark, xiv. 65.; Luke, xxii. 63, 65.

(2) Matt. xxvi. 58, 69, 75.; Mark, xiv. 54, 66, 72.; Luke, xxii. 54—62.; John, xviii. 15, 16.

(3) The question is discussed in all the commentators. See Lardner, *Credid.*, i. 2.; Bas-

nage, B. v. c. 2.; Biscoe on the Acts, c. 6.; note to Law's Theory, 147.; but above all Krebs, *Observat. in Nov. Test.*, 64—155.; Rosenmüller and Kuinoel, in loc.

(4) John, xviii. 31.

deprived of the power of life and death forty years before the destruction of the city (1), many of the most learned writers, some indeed of the ablest of the fathers (2), from arguments arising out of the practice of Roman provincial jurisprudence, and from later facts in the Evangelic history and that of the Jews, have supposed, that even if, as is doubtful, they were deprived of this power in civil, they retained it in religious, cases. Some have added, that even in the latter, the ratification of the sentence by the Roman governor, or the permission to carry it into execution, was necessary. According to this view, the object of the Sanhedrin was to bring the case before Pilate as a civil charge; since the assumption of a royal title and authority implied a design to cast off the Roman yoke. Or, if they retained the right of capital punishment in religious cases, it was contrary to usage, in the proceedings of the Sanhedrin, as sacred as law itself, to order an execution on the day of preparation for the Passover (3). As then they dared not violate that usage, and as delay was in every way dangerous, either from the fickleness of the people, who having been momentarily wrought up to a pitch of deadly animosity against Jesus, might again, by some act of power or goodness on his part, be carried away back to his side; or, in case of tumult, from the unsolicited intervention of the Romans; their plainest course was to obtain, if possible, the immediate support and assistance of the government.

Real relation of the Sanhedrin to the government.

In my own opinion, formed upon the study of the cotemporary Jewish history, the power of the Sanhedrin, at this period of political change and confusion, on this, as well as on other points, was altogether undefined. Under the Asmonean princes, the sovereign, uniting the civil and religious supremacy, the High-Priesthood with the royal power, exercised, with the Sanhedrin as his council, the highest political and civil jurisdiction. Herod, whose authority depended on the protection of Rome, and was maintained by his wealth, and in part by foreign mercenaries, although he might leave to the Sanhedrin, as the supreme tribunal, the judicial power, and in ordinary religious cases might admit their unlimited jurisdiction; yet no doubt watched and controlled their proceedings with the jealousy of an Asiatic despot, and practically, if not formally, subjected all their decrees to his revision: at least he would not have permitted any encroachment on his own supreme authority. In fact, according to the general tradition of the Jews, he at

(1) *Traditio est quadraginta annos ante excidium templi, ablatum fuisse jus vitæ et mortis. Hieros. Sanhed., fol. 18. 1. lb. fol. 242. Quadraginta annis ante vastatum templum, ablata sunt judicia capitalia ab Israele.* There is, however, some doubt about the reading and translation of this passage. Wagenseil reads four for forty. Selden (*De Syn.*) insists that the judgments were not taken away, but interrupted and disused.

(2) Among the ancients, Chrysostom and Au-

gustine; among the moderns, Lightfoot, Lardner, Krebs, Rosenmüller, Kuinoël. The best disquisition on that side of the question appears to me that of Krebs; on the other, that of Basnage.

(3) Cyril and Augustine, with whom Kuinoël is inclined to agree, interpret the words of St. John, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," by subjoining, "on the day of the Passover."



one time put the whole Sanhedrin to death : and since, as his life advanced, his tyranny became more watchful and suspicious, he was more likely to diminish than increase the powers of the national tribunal. In the short interval of little more than thirty years, which had elapsed since the death of Herod, nearly ten had been occupied by the reign of Archelaus. On his deposal, the Sanhedrin had probably extended or resumed its original functions, but still the supreme civil authority rested in the Roman Procurator. All the commotions excited by the turbulent adventurers who infested the country, or by Judas the Galilean and his adherents, would fall under the cognisance of the civil governor, and were repressed by his direct interference. Nor can capital religious offences have been of frequent occurrence, since it is evident that the rigour of the Mosaic Law had been greatly relaxed, partly by the feebleness of the judicial power, partly by the tendency of the age, which ran in a counter direction to those acts of idolatry against which the Mosaic statutes were chiefly framed, and left few crimes obnoxious to the extreme penalty. Nor, until the existence of their polity and religion was threatened, first by the progress of Christ, and afterwards of his religion, would they have cared to be armed with an authority, which it was rarely, if ever, necessary or expedient to put forth in its full force (1).

This, then, may have been, strictly speaking, a new case, the first which had occurred since the reduction of Judæa to a Roman province. The Sanhedrin, from whom all jurisdiction in political cases was withdrawn ; and who had no recent precedent for the infliction of capital punishment on any religious charge, might think it more prudent (particularly during this hurried and tumultuous proceeding, which commenced at midnight, and must be dispatched with the least possible delay) at once to disclaim an authority which, however the Roman governor seemed to attribute to them, he might at last prevent their carrying into execution. All the other motives then operating on their minds would concur in favour of this course of proceeding :—their mistrust of the people, who might attempt a rescue from their feeble and unrespected officers, and could only, if they should fall off to the other side, be controlled by the dread of the Roman military ; and the reluctance to profane so sacred a day by a public execution, of which the odium would thus be cast

That of Jesus a new and unprecedented case.

Motives of the rulers in disclaiming their power.

(1) It may be worth observing, that not merely were the pharisaic and sadducaic party at issue on the great question of the expediency of the severe administration of the law, which implied frequency of capital punishment ; the latter party being notoriously sanguinary in the execution of public justice ; but even in the pharisaic party one school, that of Hillel, was accused (Jost *Geschichte der Israeliten*), by the rival school of Shammai, of dangerous lenity in the adminis-

tration of the law, and of culpable unwillingness to inflict the punishment of death.

The authority of them, says Lightfoot (from the Rabbins), was not taken away by the Romans, but rather relinquished by themselves. The slothfulness of the council destroyed its own authority. Hear it justly upbraided in this matter : — The council which puts one to death in seven years is called "destructive." R. Lazar Ben Azariah said ; which puts one to death in seventy years. Lightfoot, in loc.

on their foreign rulers. It was clearly their policy, at any cost, to secure the intervention of Pilate, as well to insure the destruction of their victim, as to shift the responsibility from their own head upon that of the Romans. They might, not unreasonably, suppose that Pilate, whose relentless disposition had been shown in a recent instance, would not hesitate, at once, and on their authority, on the first intimation of a dangerous and growing party, to act without further examination or inquiry, and without scruple, add one victim more to the robbers or turbulent insurgents who, it appears, were kept in prison, in order to be executed as a terrible example at that period of national concourse.

Jesus before Pilate.

Remorse and death of Judas.

It should seem that while Jesus was sent in chains to the Prætorium of Pilate, whether in the Antonia, the fortress adjacent to the Temple, or in part of Herod's palace, which was connected with the mountain of the Temple by a bridge over the Tyropæon, the council adjourned to their usual place of assemblage, the chamber called Gazith, within the Temple. A deputation only accompanied the prisoner to explain and support the charge, and here probably it was that, in his agony of remorse, Judas brought back the reward that he had received (1); and when the assembly, to his confession of his crime, in betraying the innocent blood, replied with cold and contumelious unconcern, he cast down the money on the pavement, and rushed away to close his miserable life. Nor must the characteristic incident be omitted, the Sanhedrin, who had not hesitated to reward the basest treachery, probably out of the Temple funds, scruple to receive back and replace in the sacred Treasury, the price of blood. The sum, therefore, is set apart for the purchase of a field for the burial of strangers, long known by the name of Aceldama, the field of blood (2). Such is ever the absurdity, as well as the heinousness, of crimes committed in the name of religion.

Astonishment of Pilate.

The first emotion of Pilate at this strange accusation from the great tribunal of the nation, however rumours of the name and influence of Jesus had, no doubt, reached his ears, must have been the utmost astonishment. To the Roman mind the Jewish character was ever an inexplicable problem. But if so when they were seen scattered about and mingled with the countless diversities of races of discordant habits, usages, and religions, which thronged to the metropolis of the world, or were dispersed through the principal cities of the empire; in their own country, where there was, as it were, a concentration of all their extraordinary national propensities, they must have appeared in still stronger opposition to the

(1) Matt. xxvii. 3—10.

(2) The sum appears extremely small for the purchase of a field, even should we adopt the very probable suggestion of Kuinoel, that it was a field in which the fuller's earth had been

worked out, and which was therefore entirely barren and unproductive. Kuinoel, in loc. Matt. xxvii. 2—14.; Mark, xiv. 1—5.; Luke, xxiii. 1—6. John, xviii. 28—38.

rest of mankind. To the loose manner in which religious belief hung on the greater part of the subjects of the Roman empire, their recluse and uncompromising attachment to the faith of their ancestors offered the most singular contrast. Every where else the temples were open, the rites free to the stranger by race or country, who rarely scrupled to do homage to the tutelary deity of the place. The Jewish Temple alone received, indeed, but with a kind of jealous condescension, the offerings even of the Emperor. Throughout the rest of the world, religious enthusiasm might not be uncommon, here and there, in individual cases, particularly in the East : the priests of some of the mystic religions at times excited a considerable body of followers, and drove them blindfold to the wildest acts of superstitious frenzy ; but the sudden access of religious fervour was, in general, as transient as violent ; the flame burned with rapid and irresistible fury, and went out of itself. The Jews stood alone (according to the language and opinion of the Roman world), as a nation of religious fanatics ; and this fanaticism was a deep, a settled, a conscientious feeling, and formed, an essential and inseparable part, the groundwork of their rigid and unsocial character.

Yet even to one familiarised by a residence of several years with the Jewish nation, on the present occasion, the conduct of the Sanhedrin must have appeared utterly unaccountable. This senate, or municipal body, had left to the Roman governor to discover the danger, and suppress the turbulence, of the robbers and insurgents against whom Pilate had taken such decisive measures. Now, however, they appear suddenly seized with an access of loyalty for the Roman authority, and a trembling apprehension of the least invasion of the Roman title to supremacy. And against whom were they actuated by this unwonted caution, and burning with this unprecedented zeal ? Against a man who, as far as he could discover, was a harmless, peaceful, and benevolent enthusiast, who had persuaded many of the lower orders to believe in certain unintelligible doctrines, which seemed to have no relation to the government of the country, and were, as yet, no way connected with insurrectionary movements. In fact, he could not but clearly see that they were enemies of the influence obtained by Jesus over the populace ; but whether Jesus or the Sanhedrin governed the religious feelings and practices of the people, was a matter of perfect indifference to the Roman supremacy.

The vehemence with which they pressed the charge, and the charge itself, were equally inexplicable. When Pilate referred back, as it were, the judgment to themselves, and offered to leave Jesus to be punished by the existing law ; while they shrunk from that responsibility, and disclaimed, at least over such a case and at such a season, the power of life and death, they did not in the least relax

at the conduct of the Sanhedrin :

at the nature of the charge,



the vehement earnestness of their persecution. Jesus was accused of assuming the title of King of the Jews, and with an intention of throwing off the Roman yoke. But, however little Pilate may have heard or understood his doctrines, the conduct and demeanour of Christ were so utterly at variance with such a charge; the only intelligible article in the accusation, his imputed prohibition of the payment of tribute, so unsupported by proof, as to bear no weight. This redoubted king had been seized by the emissaries of the Sanhedrin, perhaps Roman soldiers placed under their orders; had been conveyed without resistance through the city; his few adherents, mostly unarmed peasants, had fled at the instant of his capture; not the slightest tumultuary movement had taken place during his examination before the High Priest, and the popular feeling seemed rather at present incensed against him than inclined to take his part.

The deputation refuse to communicate with Pilate from fear of legal defilement,

To the mind of Pilate, indeed, accustomed to the disconnection of religion and morality, the more striking contradiction in the conduct of the Jewish rulers may not have appeared altogether so extraordinary. At the moment when they were violating the great eternal and immutable principles of all religion, and infringing on one of the positive commandments of their law, by persecuting to death an innocent man, they were witholden by religious scruple from entering the dwelling of Pilate; they were endangering the success of their cause, lest this intercourse with the unclean stranger should exclude them from the worship of their God — a worship for which they contracted no disqualifying defilement by this deed of blood. The deputation stood *without* the hall of Pilate (1); and not even their animosity against Jesus could induce them to depart from that superstitious usage, to lend the weight of their personal appearance to the solemn accusation, or, at all events, to deprive the hated object of their persecution of any advantage which he might receive from undergoing his examination without being confronted with his accusers. Pilate seems to have paid so much respect to their usages, that he went out to receive their charge, and to inquire the nature of the crime for which Jesus was denounced.

Examination before Pilate,

The simple question put to Jesus, on his first interrogatory before Pilate, was whether he claimed the title of King of the Jews (2). The answer of Jesus may be considered as an appeal to the justice and right feeling of the governor. “As Roman prefect, have you any cause for suspecting me of ambitious or insurrectionary designs; do you entertain the least apprehension of my seditious demeanour; or are you not rather adopting the suggestions of my enemies, and lending yourself to their unwarranted animosity?” Pilate disclaims all communion with the passions or the prejudices of the Jewish

(1) John, xviii, 28.

(2) John, xviii. 33—37.

rulers; but Jesus had been brought before him, denounced as a dangerous disturber of the public peace, and he was officially bound to take cognisance of such a charge. In the rest of the defence of Christ, the only part intelligible to Pilate would be the unanswerable appeal to the peaceful conduct of his followers. When Jesus asserted that he was a king, yet evidently implied a moral or religious sense in his use of the term, Pilate might attribute a vague meaning to his language, from the Stoic axiom, *I am a king when I rule myself* (1); and thus give a sense to that which otherwise would have sounded in his ears like unintelligible mysticism. His perplexity, however, must have been greatly increased when Jesus, in this perilous hour, when his life trembled, at it were, on the balance, declared that the object of his birth and of his life was the establishment of “the truth.” “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” That the peace of a nation or the life of an individual should be endangered on account of the truth or falsehood of any system of speculative opinions, was so diametrically opposite to the general opinion and feeling of the Roman world, that Pilate, either in contemptuous mockery, or with the merciful design of showing the utter harmlessness and insignificance of such points, inquired what he meant by truth, — what truth had to do with the present question, with a question of life and death, with a capital charge brought by the national council before the supreme tribunal. Apparently despairing, on one side, of bringing him, whom he seems to have considered a blameless enthusiast, to his senses; on the other, unwilling to attach so much importance to what appeared to him in so different a light, he wished at once to put an end to the whole affair. He abruptly left Jesus, and went out again to the Jewish deputation at the gate, (now perhaps increased by a greater number of the Sanhedrin,) and declared his conviction of the innocence of Jesus.

Pilate endeavours to save Jesus.

At this unexpected turn, the Sanhedrin burst into a furious clamour, reiterated their vague, perhaps contradictory, and to the ears of Pilate unintelligible or insignificant charges, and seemed determined to press the conviction with implacable animosity. Pilate turned to Jesus, who had been led out, to demand his answer to these charges. Jesus stood collected, but silent, and the astonishment of Pilate was still further heightened. The only accusation which seemed to bear any meaning, imputed to Jesus the raising tumultuous meetings of the people throughout the country, from Judæa to Galilee (2). This incidental mention of Galilee, made perhaps with an invidious design of awakening in the mind of the go-

Clamours of the accusers.

(1) *Ad summum sapiens uno minor est Jove, dives Liber, honoratus, pulcher. Rex denique regum.*

*Hor. Ep. ii. 1. 106. Comp. Sat. i. 3. 125.*

(2) *Luke, xxiii. 5.*

*At pueri ludentes, rex eris, inquit, Si recte facies. Epist. i. 1. 59.*

vernor the remembrance of the turbulent character of that people, suggested to Pilate a course by which he might rid himself of the embarrassment and responsibility of this strange transaction. It has been conjectured, not without probability, that the massacre of Herod's subjects was the cause of the enmity that existed between the tetrarch and the Roman governor. Pilate had now an opportunity at once to avoid an occurrence of the same nature, in which he had no desire to be implicated, and to make overtures of reconciliation to the native sovereign. He was indifferent about the fate of Jesus, provided he could shake off all actual concern in his death; or he might suppose that Herod, uninfected with the inexplicable enmity of the chief priests, might be inclined to protect his innocent subject (1).

Jesus sent  
to Herod.

The fame of Jesus had already excited the curiosity of Herod, but his curiosity was rather that which sought amusement or excitement from the powers of an extraordinary wonder-worker, than that which looked for information or improvement from a wise moral, or a divinely-commissioned religious, teacher. The circumstances of the interview, which probably took place in the presence of the tetrarch and his courtiers, and into which none of the disciples of Jesus could find their way, are not related. The investigation was long; but Jesus maintained his usual unruffled silence, and at the close of the examination, he was sent back to Pilate. By the murder of John, Herod had incurred deep and lasting unpopularity; he might be unwilling to increase his character for cruelty by the same conduct towards Jesus, against whom, as he had not the same private reasons for requiring his support, he had not the same bitterness of personal animosity; nor was his sovereignty, as has before been observed, endangered in the same manner as that of the chief priests, by the progress of Jesus. Herod therefore might treat with derision what appeared to him an harmless assumption of royalty, and determine to effect, by contempt and contumely, that degradation of Jesus in the estimation of the people which his more cruel measures in the case of John had failed to accomplish. With his connivance, therefore, if not under his instructions, his soldiers (perhaps some of them,—as those of his father had been, foreigners, Gaulish or Thracian barbarians) were permitted or encouraged in every kind of cruel and wanton insult. They clothed him, in mockery of his royal title, in a purple robe, and so escorted him back to Pilate, who, if he occupied part of the Herodion, not the Antonia, was close at hand, only in a different quarter of the same extensive palace.

Jesus sent  
back with  
insult.

The refusal of Herod to take cognisance of the charge renewed the embarrassment of Pilate, but a way yet seemed open to extricate

(1) Luke, xxiii. 5—12.



himself from his difficulty. There was a custom, that in honour of the great festival, the Passover, a prisoner should be set at liberty at the request of the people (1). The multitude had already become clamorous for their annual privilege. Among the half-robbers, half-insurgents, who had so long infested the province of Judæa and the whole of Palestine, there was a celebrated bandit, named Barabbas, who, probably in some insurrectionary tumult, had been guilty of murder. Of the extent of his crime we are ignorant ; but Pilate, by selecting the worst case, that which the people could not but consider the most atrocious and offensive to the Roman government, might desire to force them, as it were, to demand the release of Jesus. Barabbas had been undeniably guilty of those overt acts of insubordination, which they endeavoured to infer as necessary consequences of the teaching of Jesus.

He came forth, therefore, to the outside of his prætorium, and having declared that neither himself nor Herod could discover any real guilt in the prisoner who had been brought before them, he appealed to them: to choose between the condemned insurgent and murderer, and the blameless prophet of Nazareth. The High Priests had now wrought the people to madness, and had most likely crowded the courts round Pilate's quarters with their most zealous and devoted partizans. The voice of the Governor was drowned with an instantaneous burst of acclamation, demanding the release of Barabbas. Pilate made yet another ineffectual attempt to save the life of the innocent man. He thought by some punishment, short of death, if not to awaken the compassion, to satisfy the animosity, of the people (2). The person of Jesus was given up to the lictors, and scourging with rods, the common Roman punishment for minor offences, was inflicted with merciless severity. The soldiers platted a crown of thorns, or, as is thought, of some prickly plant, as it is scarcely conceivable that life could have endured if the temples had been deeply pierced by a circle of thorns (3). In this pitiable state Jesus was again led forth, bleeding with the scourge, his brow throbbing with the pointed crown ; and drest in the purple robe of mockery to make the last vain appeal to the compassion, the humanity, of the people. The wild and furious cries of " crucify him, crucify him," broke out on all sides. In vain Pilate commanded them to be the executioners of their own sentence, and reasserted his conviction of the innocence of Jesus. In vain he accompanied his assertion by the significant action of washing his hands in the public view, as if to show that he would contract no guilt or defilement from the blood of a blameless man (4). He was

Barabbas.

Jesus  
crowned  
with  
thorns and  
shown to  
the people.

(1) Matt. xxvii. 15—20.; Mark, xv. 6—11.; Luke, xxiii. 13—19.; John, xviii. 39.

(2) Luke, xxiii. 16.; John, xix. 1—5.

(3) It should seem, says Grotius, that the mockery was more intended than the pain. Some

suppose the plant, the naba or nabka of the Arabians—with many *small* and sharp spikes,—which would be painful, but not endanger life. Ras-selquist's Travels.

(4) Matt. xxvii. 24, 25.

The people  
demand  
his cruci-  
fixion.

Interces-  
sion of Pi-  
late's wife.

answered by the awful imprecation, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children." The deputies of the Sanhedrin pressed more earnestly the capital charge of blasphemy—"He had made himself the Son of God (1)." This inexplicable accusation still more shook the resolution of Pilate, who, perhaps at this instant, was further agitated by a message from his wife. Claudia Procula (the law which prohibited the wives of the provincial rulers from accompanying their husbands to the seat of their governments now having fallen into disuse) had been permitted to reside with her husband Pilate in Palestine (2). The stern justice of the Romans had guarded by this law against the baneful effects of female influence. In this instance, had Pilate listened to the humaner counsels of his wife, from what a load of guilt would he have delivered his own conscience and his province. Aware of the proceedings which had occupied Pilate during the whole night; perhaps in some way better acquainted with the character of Jesus, she had gone to rest; but her sleep, her morning slumbers, when visions were supposed to be more than ordinarily true, were disturbed by dreams of the innocence of Jesus, and the injustice and inhumanity to which her husband might lend his authority.

Last inter-  
rogatory  
of Jesus.

The prisoner was withdrawn into the guard-room, and Pilate endeavoured to obtain some explanation of the meaning of this new charge from Jesus himself. He made no answer, and Pilate appealed to his fears, reminding him that his life and death depended on the power of the Prefect. Jesus replied, that his life was only in the power of divine Providence, by whose permission alone Pilate enjoyed a temporary authority (3). But touched, it may seem, by the exertions of Pilate to save him, with all his accustomed gentleness he declares Pilate guiltless of his blood, in comparison with his betrayers and persecutors among his own countrymen. This speech still further moved Pilate in his favour. But the justice and the compassion of the Roman gave way at once before the fear of weakening his interest, or endangering his personal safety, with his imperial master. He made one effort more to work on the implacable people; he was answered with the same furious exclamations, and with menaces of more alarming import. They accused him of indifference to the stability of the imperial power:—"Thou art not Cæsar's friend (4):" they threatened to report his conduct, in thus allowing the title of royalty to be assumed with impunity, to the reigning Cæsar. That Cæsar was the dark and jealous Tiberius. Up to this period the Jewish nation, when they had complained of the tyranny of their native sovereigns, had ever obtained a favourable

(1) John, xix. 7.

(2) Matt. xxvii. 19—23. This law had fallen into neglect in the time of Augustus; during the reign of Tiberius it was openly infringed, and the motion of Cæcina in the Senate to put it more

strictly in force, produced no effect. Tac. Ann. iii. 33.

(3) John, xix. 8—11.

(4) John, xix. 12.

hearing at Rome. Even against Herod the Great, their charges had been received; they had been admitted to a public audience, and though their claim to national independence at the death of that sovereign had not been allowed, Archelaus had received his government with limited powers: and on the complaint of the people, had been removed from his throne. In short, the influence of that attachment to the Cæsarean family (1), which had obtained for the nation distinguished privileges both from Julius and Augustus, had not yet been effaced by that character of turbulence and insubordination which led to their final ruin.

In what manner such a charge of not being “Cæsar’s friend” might be misrepresented or aggravated, it was impossible to conjecture, but the very strangeness of the accusation was likely to work on the gloomy and suspicious mind of Tiberius; and the frail tenure by which Pilate held his favour at Rome is shown by his ignominious recall and banishment some years after, *on the complaint of the Jewish people*; though not, it is true, for an act of indiscreet mercy, but one of unnecessary cruelty. The latent and suspended decision of his character reappeared in all its customary recklessness. The life of one man, however blameless, was not for an instant to be considered, when his own advancement, his personal safety, were in peril: his sterner nature resumed the ascendant; he mounted the tribunal, which was erected on a tessellated pavement near the prætorium (2), and passed the solemn, the irrevocable sentence. It might almost seem, that in bitter mockery, Pilate for the last time demanded, “Shall I crucify your king?” “We have no king, but Cæsar,” was the answer of the chief priests. Pilate yielded up the contest; the murderer was commanded to be set at liberty, the just man surrendered to crucifixion.

Condemnation of Jesus.

The remorseless soldiery were at hand, and instigated, no doubt, by the influence, by the bribes, of the Sanhedrin, carried the sentence into effect with the most savage and wanton insults. They dressed him up in all the mock semblance of royalty (he had already the purple robe and the crown); a reed was now placed in his hand for a sceptre; they paid him their insulting homage; struck him with the palms of their hands; spit upon him; and then stripping him of his splendid attire, drest him again in his own simple raiment, and led him out to death (3).

Insults of Jesus by the populace and soldiery.

The place of execution was without the gates. This was the case

(1) Compare Hist. of the Jews, ii. 86.

(2) We should not notice the strange mistake of the learned German, Hug, on this subject, if it had not been adopted by a clever writer in a popular journal. Hug has supposed the λιθόστρωτον (perhaps the tessellated) stone pavement on which Pilate’s tribunal was erected, to be the same which was the scene of a remarkable incident mentioned by Josephus. During the siege of the Temple, a centurion, Julianus,

charged on horseback, and forced his way into the inner court of the Temple, his horse stepped up on the pavement (λιθόστρωτον), and he fell. It is scarcely credible that any writer acquainted with Jewish antiquities, or the structure of the Temple, could suppose that the Roman governor would raise his tribunal within the inviolable precincts of the inner court.

(3) Matt. xxvii. 27—30.; Mark, xv. 15—20.



in most towns ; and in Jerusalem, which, according to tradition, always maintained a kind of resemblance to the camp in the wilderness (1), as criminal punishments were forbidden to defile the sacred precincts, a field beyond the walls was set apart and desecrated for this unhallowed purpose (2).

Circum-  
stances of  
the cruci-  
fixion.

Hitherto we have been tempted into some detail, both by the desire of ascertaining the state of the public mind, and the motives of the different actors in this unparalleled transaction, and by the necessity of harmonising the various circumstances related in the four separate narratives. As we approach the appalling close, we tremble lest the colder process of explanation should deaden the solemn and harrowing impression of the scene, or weaken the contrast between the wild and tumultuous uproar of the triumphant enemies and executioners of the Son of Man, with the deep and unutterable misery of the few faithful adherents who still followed his footsteps : and, far above all, his own serene, his more than human, composure, the dignity of suffering, which casts so far into the shade every example of human heroism. Yet in the most trifling incidents there is so much life and reality, so remarkable an adherence to the usages of the time, and to the state of public feeling, that we cannot but point out the most striking of these particulars. For, in fact, there is no single circumstance, however minute, which does not add to the truth of the whole description, so as to stamp it (we have honestly endeavoured to consider it with the calmest impartiality) with an impression of credibility, of certainty, equal to, if not surpassing, every event in the history of man. The inability of Jesus (exhausted by a sleepless night, by the length of the trial, by insults and bodily pain, by the scourging and the blows) to bear his own cross (the constant practice of condemned criminals) (3); the seizure of a Cyrenian, from a province more numerous colonised by Jews than any other, except Egypt and Babylonia, as he was entering the city, and, perhaps, was known to be an adherent of Jesus, to bear his cross (4); the customary deadening potion of wine and myrrh (5), which was given to malefactors previous to their execution, but which Jesus, aware of its stupifying or intoxicating effect, and determined to preserve his firmness and self-command, but slightly touched with his lips; the title, the King (6) of the Jews, in three

(1) Numbers, xv. 85.; 1 Kings, xxi. 13.; Hebrews, xiii. 12. *Extra urbem, patibulum.* Plautus. See Grotius.

(2) It is curious to trace on what uncertain grounds rest many of our established notions relating to incidents in the early history of our religion. No one scruples to speak in the popular language of "the Hill of Calvary;" yet there appears no evidence, which is not purely legendary, for the assertion that Calvary was on a hill. The notion arose from the fanciful interpretation of the word *Golgotha*, the place of a skull, which was thought to imply some resem-

blance in its form to a human skull; but it is far more probably derived from having been strewn with the remains of condemned malefactors.

(3) Hence the common term "*furcifer*." *Patibulum ferat per urbem, deinde affigatur cruci.* Plauti frag.

(4) Mark, xv. 21 ; Luke, xxiii. 26.

(5) Matt. xxvii. 34.; Mark, xv. 23. The Rabbins say, wine with frankincense. This potion was given by the Jews out of compassion to criminals.

(6) Luke, xxiii. 38 ; John, xix. 19, 20.

languages (1), so strictly in accordance with the public usage of the time; the division and casting lots for his garments by the soldiers who executed him (those who suffered the ignominious punishment of the cross being exposed entirely naked, or with nothing more than was necessary for decency) (2); all these particulars, as well as the instrument of execution, the cross, are in strict unison with the well-known practice of Roman criminal jurisprudence. The execution of the two malefactors, one on each side of Jesus, is equally consonant with their ordinary administration of justice, particularly in this ill-fated province. Probably before, unquestionably at a later period, Jerusalem was doomed to behold the long line of crosses on which her sons were left by the relentless Roman authorities to struggle with slow and agonising death.

In other circumstances, the Jewish national character is equally conspicuous. This appears even in the conduct of the malefactors. The fanatical Judaism of one, not improbably a follower, or infected with the doctrines of the Gaulonite, even in his last agony, has strength enough to insult the pretender to the name of a Messiah who yet has not the power to release himself and his fellow-sufferers from death. The other, of milder disposition, yet in death, inclines to believe in Jesus, and when he returns to assume his kingdom, would hope to share in its blessings. To him Jesus, speaking in the current language promises an immediate reward; he is to pass at once from life to happiness (3). Besides this, how striking the triumph of his enemies, as he seemed to surrender himself without resistance to the growing pangs of death; the assemblage, not only of the rude and ferocious populace, but of many of the most distinguished rank, the members of the Sanhedrin, to behold and to insult the last moments of their once redoubted, but now despised, adversary. And still every indication of approaching death seemed more and more to justify their rejection! still no sign of the mighty, the all-powerful Messiah! Their taunting allusions to his royal title, to his misapprehended speech, which rankled in their hearts, about the demolition and rebuilding of the Temple (4); to his power of healing others, and restoring life, a power in his own case so manifestly suspended or lost; the offer to acknowledge him as the Messiah, if he would come down from the cross in the face of day; the still more malignant reproach, that he, who had boasted of the peculiar favour of God, was now so visibly deserted and abandoned,—the son of God, as he called himself, is left to perish despised and disregarded

The two  
malefac-  
tors.

Spectators  
of the  
execution.

(1) The inscriptions on the palisades which divided the part of the temple court which might be entered by the Gentiles from that which was open only to the Jews, were written, with the Roman sanction, in the three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

(2) Matt. xxvii. 35.; Mark, xv. 24.; Luke, xxiii. 34.; John, xix. 23, 24.

(3) Luke, xxiii. 39—43.

(4) Matt. xxvii. 39—43.; Mark, xv. 31, 32.; Luke, xxiii. 35.

by God; all this as strikingly accords with, and illustrates the state of, Jewish feeling, as the former circumstances of the Roman usages.

Conduct  
of Jesus.

And amid the whole wild and tumultuous scene there are some quiet gleams of pure Christianity, which contrast with and relieve the general darkness and horror: not merely the superhuman patience, with which insult, and pain, and ignominy, are borne; not merely the serene self-command, which shows that the senses are not benumbed or deadened by the intensity of suffering; but the slight incidental touches of gentleness and humanity (1). We cannot but indicate the answer to the afflicted women, who stood by the way weeping, as he passed on to Calvary, and whom he commanded not "to weep for him," but for the deeper sorrows to which themselves or their children were devoted; the notice of the group of his own kindred and followers who stood by the cross; his bequest of the support of his Virgin Mother to the beloved disciple (2); above all, that most affecting exemplification of his own tenets, the prayer for the pardon of his enemies, the palliation of their crime from their ignorance of its real enormity,—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (3)." Yet so little are the Evangelists studious of effect, that this incident of unrivalled moral sublimity, even in the whole life of Christ, is but briefly, we might almost say carelessly, noticed by St. Luke alone.

Preternatural  
darkness.

From the sixth hour (noonday), writes the Evangelists St. Matthew, there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour (4). The whole earth (the phrase in the other Evangelists) is no doubt used according to Jewish phraseology, in which Palestine, the sacred land, was emphatically the earth. This supernatural gloom appears to resemble that terrific darkness which precedes an earthquake.

For these three hours Jesus had borne the excruciating anguish—his human nature begins to fail, and he complains of the burning thirst, the most painful but usual aggravation of such a death. A compassionate bystander filled a sponge with vinegar, fixed it on a long reed, and was about to lift it to his lips, when the dying Jesus uttered his last words, those of the twenty-second Psalm, in which, in the bitterness of his heart, David had complained of the manifest desertion of his God, who had yielded him up to his enemies—the phrase had perhaps been in common use in extreme distress—Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani?—My God, my God, why hast

(1) Luke, xxiii. 27—31.

(2) John, xix. 25—27.

(3) Luke, xxiii. 34.

(4) Matt. xxvii. 45—53.; Mark, xv. 33—38.; Luke, xxiii. 44, 45.; John, xix. 28—30.

Gibbon has said, and truly, as regards all well-informed and sober interpreters of the

sacred writings, that "the celebrated passage of Phlegon is now wisely abandoned." It still maintains its ground, however, with writers of a certain class, notwithstanding its irrelevancy has already been admitted by Origen, and its authority rejected by every writer who has the least pretensions to historical criticism.



thou forsaken me (1)? The compassionate hand of the man, raising the vinegar, was arrested by others, who, a few perhaps in trembling curiosity, but more in bitter mockery, supposing that he called not on God (Eli) but on Elias, commanded him to wait and see, whether, even now, that great and certain sign of the Messiah, the appearance of Elijah, would at length take place.

Their barbarous triumph was uninterrupted; and he, who yet (his followers were not without some lingering hope, and the more superstitious of his enemies not without some trembling apprehension) might awaken to all his terrible and prevailing majesty, had now manifestly expired (2). The Messiah, the imperishable, the eternal Messiah, had quietly yielded up the ghost.

Death of  
Jesus.

Even the dreadful earthquake which followed, seemed to pass away without appalling the enemies of Jesus. The rending of the veil of the Temple from the top to the bottom, so strikingly significant of the approaching abolition of the local worship, would either be concealed by the priesthood, or attributed as a natural effect to the convulsion of the earth. The same convulsion would displace the stones which covered the ancient tombs, and lay open many of the innumerable rock-hewn sepulchres which perforated the hills on every side of the city, and expose the dead to public view. To the awe-struck and depressed minds of the followers of Jesus, no doubt, were confined those visionary appearances of the spirits of their deceased brethren, which are obscurely intimated in the rapid narratives of the Evangelists (3).

But these terrific appearances, which seem to have been lost on the infatuated Jews, were not without effect on the less prejudiced Roman soldiery; they appeared to bear the testimony of Heaven to the innocence, to the divine commission, of the crucified Jesus. The centurion who guarded the spot according to St. Luke, declared aloud his conviction that Jesus was a just man; according to St. Matthew, that he was the Son of God (4).

Secure now, by the visible marks of dissolution, by the piercing of his side, from which blood and water flowed out, that Jesus was actually dead; and still, even in their most irreligious acts of cruelty and wickedness, punctiliously religious (since it was a sin to leave the body of that blameless being on the cross during one day (5),

Burial of  
Jesus.

(1) Matt. xxvii. 46.; Mark, xv. 34—37.; John, xix. 28—30.

(2) Luke, xxiii. 46.

(3) This is the probable and consistent view of Michaelis. Those who assert a supernatural eclipse of the sun rest on the most dubious and suspicious tradition; while those who look with jealousy on the introduction of natural causes, however so timed as in fact to be no less extraordinary than events altogether contrary to the course of nature, forget or despise the difficulty of accounting for the apparently slight sensation produced on the minds of the Jews, and the total

silence of all other history. Compare the very sensible note of M. Guizot on the latter part of Gibbon's xvth chapter.

(4) Matt. xxvii. 54.; Luke, xxiii. 47. Lightfoot supposes that by intercourse with the Jews he may have learned their phraseology: Grotius, that he had a general impression that Jesus was a superior being.

(5) Deut. xxi. 23. The Jews usually buried executed criminals ignominiously, but at the request of a family would permit a regular burial. Lightfoot, from Babyl. Tan.

whom it had been no sin, but rather an act of the highest virtue to murder the day before), the Sanhedrin gave their consent to a wealthy adherent of Jesus, Joseph, of the town of Arimathea, to bury the body. The sanction of Pilate was easily obtained : it was taken down from the cross, and consigned to the sepulchre prepared by Joseph for his own family, but in which no body had yet been laid (1). The sepulchre was at no great distance from the place of execution : the customary rites were performed ; the body was wrapped in fine linen and anointed with a mixture of costly spice and myrrh, with which the remains of those who were held in respect by their kindred were usually preserved. As the Sabbath was drawing on, the work was performed with the utmost despatch, and Jesus was laid to rest in the grave of his faithful adherent.

The religion apparently at an end.

In that rock-hewn tomb might appear to be buried for ever both the fears of his enemies and the hopes of his followers. Though some rumours of his predictions concerning his resurrection had crept abroad, sufficient to awaken the caution of the Sanhedrin, and to cause them to seal the outward covering of the sepulchre, and, with the approbation of Pilate, to station a Roman guard upon the spot; yet, as far as the popular notion of the Messiah, nothing could be more entirely and absolutely destructive of their hopes than the patient submission of Jesus to insult, to degradation, to death. However, with some of milder nature, his exquisite sufferings might excite compassion; however the savage and implacable cruelty with which the rulers urged his fate might appear revolting to the multitude, after their first access of religious indignation had passed away, and the recollection returned to the gentle demeanour and beneficent acts of Jesus; yet the hope of redemption, whatever meaning they might attach to the term, whether deliverance from their enemies or the restoration of their theocratic government, had set in utter darkness. However vague or contradictory this notion among the different sects or classes, with the mass of the people, nothing less than an immediate instantaneous re-appearance in some appalling or imposing form could have reinstated Jesus in his high place in the popular expectation. Without this, his career was finally closed, and he would pass away at once, as one of the brief wonders of the time, his temporary claims to respect or attachment refuted altogether by the shame, by the ignominy, of his death. His ostensible leading adherents were men of the humblest origin, and, as yet, of no distinguished ability; men from whom little danger could be apprehended, and who might safely be treated with contemptuous neglect. No attempt appears to have been made to secure a single person, or to prevent their peaceful retreat to their native Galilee. The whole religion centered in the

(1) Matt. xxvii. 57—60.; Mark, xv. 42—47.; Luke, xxiii. 50—56.; John, xix. 38—42.

person of Jesus, and in his death was apparently suppressed, crushed, extinguished for ever. After a few days, the Sanhedrin would dread nothing less than a new disturbance from the same quarter; and Pilate, as the whole affair had passed off without tumult, would soon suppress the remonstrances of his conscience at the sacrifice of an innocent life, since the public peace had been maintained, and no doubt his own popularity with the leading Jews considerably heightened, at so cheap a price. All then was at an end: yet, after the death of Christ, commences, strictly speaking, the history of Christianity.

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## BOOK II.

### CHAPTER I.

THE RESURRECTION, AND FIRST PROMULGATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

THE resurrection of Jesus is the basis of Christianity ; it is the groundwork of the *Christian* doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Henceforward that great truth begins to assume a new character, and to obtain an influence over the political and social, as well as over the individual happiness of man, unknown in the former ages of the world (1). It is no longer a feeble and uncertain instinct, nor a remote speculative opinion, obscured by the more pressing necessities and cares of the present life, but the universal predominant sentiment, constantly present to the thoughts, enwoven with the usages, and pervading the whole moral being of man. The dim and scattered rays, either of traditionary belief, of intuitive feeling, or of philosophic reasoning, were brought as it were to a focus, condensed and poured with an immeasurably stronger, an expanding, an all-permeating light upon the human soul (2). Whatever its origin, whether in human nature, or the aspirations of high-thoughted individuals, propagated through their followers, or in former revelation, it received such an impulse, and was so deeply and universally moulded up with the popular mind in all orders, that from this period may be dated the true era of its dominion. If by no means new in its elementary principle, it was new in the degree and the extent to which it began to operate in the affairs of men (3).

(1) Our Saviour assumes the doctrine of another life, as the basis of his doctrines, because, in a certain sense, it was already the popular belief among the Jews, but it is very different with the Apostles, when they address the heathen, who formed far the largest part of the converts to Christianity.

(2) I have found some of these observations and even expressions, anticipated by the striking remarks of Lessing. Und so ward Christus der erste zuverlässige praktische Lehrer der Unsterblichkeit der Seele. Der erste zuverlässige Lehrer. Zuverlässig durch seine Weissagungen, die in ihm erfüllt schienen : zuverlässig durch die Wunder die er verrichtete : zuverlässig durch seine eigne Wiederbelebung nach einem Tode, durch die er seine Lehre versiegelt hatte. Der erste praktische Lehrer. Denn ein anders ist, die Unsterblichkeit der Seele, als eine philosophische

Speculation, vermuthen, wünschen, glauben : ein anders seine innern und aussern Handlungen darnach einrichten. Lessing. Werke, ix. p. 63.

(3) The most remarkable evidence of the extent to which German speculation has wandered away from the first principles of Christianity is this ; that one of the most religious writers, the one who has endeavoured with the most earnest sincerity to reconnect religious belief with the philosophy of the times, has actually represented Christianity without, or almost without, the immortality of the soul ; and this the ardent and eloquent translator of Plato ! Copious and full on the moral regeneration effected by Christ in this world, with the loftiest sentiments of the emancipation of the human soul from the bondage of sin by the gospel, Schleiermacher is silent, or almost silent, on the redemption from death. He beholds Christ distinctly as bringing life, only

The calm inquirer into the history of human nature, as displayed in the existing records of our race, if unhappily disinclined to receive the Christian faith as a divine revelation, must nevertheless behold in this point of time the crisis, and in this circumstance the governing principle, of the destinies of mankind during many centuries of their most active and fertile development. A new race of passions was introduced into the political arena, as well as into the individual heart, or rather the natural and universal passions were enlisted in the service of more absorbing and momentous interests. The fears and hopes by which man is governed, took a wider range, embracing the future life in many respects with as much, or even stronger, energy and intenseness than the present. The stupendous dominion erected by the church, the great characteristic feature of modern history, rested almost entirely on this basis; it ruled as possessing an inherent power over the destiny of the soul in a future world. It differed in this primary principle of its authority from the sacerdotal castes of antiquity. The latter rested their influence on hereditary claims to superiority over the rest of mankind; and though they dealt sometimes, more or less largely, in the terrors and hopes of another state of being, especially in defence of their own power and privileges, theirs was as a kind of mixed aristocracy of birth and priest-craft. But if this new and irresistible power lent itself, in certain stages of society, to human ambition, and as a stern and inflexible lictor, bowed down the whole mind of man to the fasces of a spiritual tyranny, it must be likewise contemplated in its far wider and more lasting, though perhaps less imposing character, as the parent of all which is purifying, ennobling, unselfish, in Christian civilisation; as a principle of every humanising virtue which philosophy must ever want; of self-sacrifice, to which the patriotism of antiquity shrinks into a narrow and national feeling: and as introducing a doctrine of equality as sublime, as it is without danger to the necessary gradations which must exist in human society. Since the promulgation of Christianity, the immortality of the soul, and its inseparable consequence, future retribution, have not only been assumed by the legislator as the basis of all political

vaguely and remotely as bringing immortality, to light. I acknowledge that I mistrusted the extent of my own acquaintance with the writings of Schleiermacher and the accuracy with which I had read them (chiefly the Glaubenslehre and some of those sermons which were so highly admired at Berlin); but I have found my own conclusions confirmed by an author whom I cannot suspect to be unacquainted with the writings, or unjust to the character, of one for whom he entertains the most profound respect. So geschah es, dass dieser Glaubenslehre unter den Händen der Begriff des Heiles sich aus einem wesentlich jenseitigen in einem wesentlich diesseitigen verwandelte.... Hiermit ist nun aber die eigentliche Bedeutung des alten Glaubensgrundsatzes in der

that verloren gegangen. Wo die aussieht auf eine dereinstige, aus dem dann in Schauen umgesetzten Glauben emporwachsende Seligkeit so, wie in Schleiermacher's eigener Darstellung in den Hintergrund tritt, so ganz nur als eine beiläufige, in Bezug auf das Wie ganz und gar problematisch bleibende Folgerung, ja fast als eine hors d'œuvre hinzugebracht wird: da wird auch demjenigen Bewusstsein welches seine diesseitige Befriedigung in dem Glauben an Christus gewonnen hat, offenbar seine mächtigste, ja seine einzige Waffe gegen alle die ihm die Wahrheit solcher Befriedigung bestreiten, oder bezweifeln, aus den Händen gerissen. Weisse, Die Evangelische Geschichte, Band. ii. p. 451.

institutions, but the general mind has been brought into such complete unison with the spirit of the laws so founded, that the individual repugnance to the principle has been constantly overborne by the general predominant sentiment. In some periods it has seemed to survive the religion on which it was founded. Wherever, at all events, it operates upon the individual or social mind, wherever it is even tacitly admitted and assented to by the prevalent feeling of mankind, it must be traced to the profound influence which Christianity has, at least at one time, exercised over the inner nature of man. This was the moral revolution which set into activity, before unprecedented, and endowed with vitality, till then unknown, this great ruling agent in the history of the world.

Style of  
the Evan-  
gelists.

Still, however, as though almost unconscious of the future effects of this event, the narratives of the Evangelists as they approach this crisis in their own, as well as in the destinies of man, preserve their serene and unempassioned flow. Each follows his own course, with precisely that discrepancy which might be expected among inartificial writers relating the same event, without any mutual understanding or reference to each other's work, but all with the same equable and unexalted tone.

The Sabbath passed away without disturbance or commotion. The profound quiet which prevailed in the crowded capital of Judæa on the seventh day, at these times of rigid ceremonial observance, was unbroken by the partizans of Jesus. Yet even the Sabbath did not restrain the leading members of the Sanhedrin from taking the necessary precautions to guard the body of their victim: their hostile jealousy, as has been before observed, was more alive to the predictions of the resurrection than the attachment of the disciples. To prevent any secret or tumultuous attempt of the followers to possess themselves of the remains of their Master, they caused a seal to be attached to the stone which formed the door to the sepulchral enclosure, and stationed the guard, which was at their disposal, probably for the preservation of the public peace, in the garden around the tomb. The guard being Roman, might exercise their military functions on the sacred day. The disciples were no doubt restrained by the sanctity of the Sabbath, as well as by their apprehensions of re-awakening the popular indignation, even from approaching the burial-place of their Master. The religion of the day lulled alike the passions of the rulers, the popular tumult, the fears and the sorrows of the disciples.

The wo-  
men at the  
sepulchre.

It was not till the early dawn of the following morning (1) that some of the women set out to pay the last melancholy honours at the

(1) Matt. xxviii.; Mark, xvi.; Luke, xxiv.; John, xx.



sepulchre. They had bought some of those precious drugs, which were used for the preservation of the remains of the more opulent, on the evening of the crucifixion; and though the body had been anointed and wrapt in spices in the customary manner, previously to the burial, this further mark of respect was strictly according to usage. But this circumstance, thus casually mentioned, clearly shows that the women, at least, had no hope whatever of any change which could take place as to the body of Jesus (1). The party of women consisted of Mary of Magdala, a town near the lake of Tiberias; Mary, the wife of Alpheus, mother of James and Joses; Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; and Salome "the mother of Zebedee's children." They were all Galileans, and from the same neighbourhood; all faithful attendants on Jesus, and related to some of the leading disciples. They set out very early; and as perhaps they had to meet from different quarters, some not unlikely from Bethany, the sun was rising before they reached the garden. Before their arrival, the earthquake or atmospheric commotion (2) had taken place; the tomb had burst open; and the terrified guard had fled to the city. Of the sealing of the stone, and the placing of the guard they appear to have been ignorant, as, in the most natural manner, they seem suddenly to remember the difficulty of removing the ponderous stone which closed the sepulchre, and which would require the strength of several men to raise it from its place. Sepulchres in the East, those at least belonging to men of rank and opulence, were formed of an outward small court or enclosure, the entrance to which was covered by a huge stone; and within were cells or chambers, often hewn in the solid rock, for the deposit of the dead. As the women drew near, they saw that the stone had been removed and the first glance into the open sepulchre discovered that the body was no longer there. At this sight Mary Madalene appears to have hurried back to the city, to give information to Peter and John. These disciples, it may be remembered, were the only two who followed Jesus to his trial; and it is likely that they were together in some part of the city, while the rest were scattered in different quarters, or perhaps had retired to Bethany. During the absence of Mary, the other women made a closer inspection; they entered the inner

(1) In a proluſion of Griesbach, *De fontibus unde Evangelistæ ſuas de reſurrectione Domini narrationes hanſerint*, it is obſerved, that the Evangelists ſeem to have dwelt on thoſe particular points in which they were perſonally concerned. This appears to furniſh a very ſimple key to their apparent diſcrepancies. John, who received his firſt intelligence from Mary Magdalene, makes her the principal perſon in his narrative, while Matthew, who, with the reſt of the diſciples, derived his information from the other women, gives their relation, and omits the appearance of Jeſus to the Magdalene. St Mark

gives a few additional minute particulars, but the narrative of St. Luke is altogether more vague and general. He blends together, as a later hiſtorian, ſtudioſ of compreſſion, the two ſeparate tranſactions; he aſcribes to the women collectively that communication of the intelligence to the aſſembled body of the Apoſtles which appears to have been made ſeparately to two diſtinct parties; and diſregarding the order of time, he after that reverts to the viſit of St. Peter to the ſepulchre.

(2) *Σεισμος* is rather an ambiguous term, though it uſually means an earthquake.

chamber, they saw the grave-clothes lying in an orderly manner, the bandage or covering of the head rolled up, and placed on one side;—this circumstance would appear incompatible with the haste of a surreptitious, or the carelessness of a violent, removal. To their minds thus highly excited, and bewildered with astonishment, with terror, and with grief, appeared, what is described by the Evangelist as “a vision of angels.” One or more beings in human form seated in the shadowy twilight within the sepulchre, and addressing them with human voices, told them that their Master had risen from the grave, that he was to go before them into Galilee. They had departed to communicate these wonderful tidings to the other disciples, before the two summoned by Mary Magdalene arrived; of these the younger and more active, John, outran the older, Peter. But he only entered the outer chamber, from whence he could see the state in which the grave-clothes were lying; but before he entered the inner chamber, he awaited the arrival of his companion. Peter went in first, and afterwards John, who, as he states, not till then, believed that the body had been taken away, for, up to that time, the Apostles themselves had no thought or expectation of the resurrection (1). These two Apostles returned home, leaving Mary Magdalene, who probably wearied by her walk to the city and her return, had not come up with them till they had completed their search. The other women, meantime, had fled in haste, and in the silence of terror, through the hostile city; and until, later in the day, they found the Apostles assembled together, did not unburthen their hearts of this extraordinary secret. Mary Magdalene (2) was left alone; she had seen and heard nothing of the evangelic vision which had appeared to the others; but on looking down into the sepulchre, she saw the same vision which had appeared to the others, and was in her turn addressed by the angels; and it seems that her feelings were those of unmitigated sorrow. She stood near the sepulchre weeping. To her Jesus then first appeared. So little was she prepared for his presence, that she at first mistook him for the person who had the charge of the garden. Her language is that of grief, because unfriendly hands have removed the body, and carried it away to some unknown place. Nor was it till he again addressed her, that she recognised his familiar form and voice.

Arrival of  
Peter and  
John.

First ap-  
pearance  
of Jesus to  
Mary Mag-  
dalene.

Later ap-  
pearance.

The second (3) appearance of Jesus was to the other party of women, as they returned to the city, and, perhaps, separated to find out the different Apostles, to whom, when assembled, they related the whole of their adventure. In the mean time a third appearance (4) had taken place to two disciples who had made an excursion to Emmaus, a village between seven and eight miles from

(1) John, xx. 8, 9.

(2) Mark, xvi. 9—11; John, xx. 11—18

(3) Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.

(4) Mark, xvi. 12, 13; Luke, xxiv. 13—32.

Jerusalem: a fourth to the Apostle Peter; this apparition is not noticed by the Evangelists; it rests on the authority of St. Paul (1). The intelligence of the women had been received with the utmost incredulity by the assembled Apostles. The arrival of the two disciples from Emmaus, with their more particular relation of his conversing with them; his explaining the Scriptures; his breaking bread with them; made a deeper impression. Still mistrust seems to have predominated; and when Jesus appeared in the chamber, the doors of which had been closed from fear lest their meeting should be interrupted by the hostile rulers, the first sensation was terror rather than joy. It was not till Jesus conversed with them, and permitted them to ascertain by actual touch the identity of his body, that they yielded to emotions of gladness. Jesus appeared a second time, eight days after (2), in the public assembly of the disciples, and condescended to remove the doubts of one Apostle, who had not been present at the former meeting, by permitting him to inspect and touch his wounds.

This incredulity of the Apostles, related with so much simplicity, is, on many accounts, most remarkable, considering the apparent distinctness with which Jesus appears to have predicted both his death and resurrection, and the rumour which put the Sanhedrin on their guard against any clandestine removal of the body. The key to this difficulty is to be sought in the opinions of the time. The notion of a resurrection was intimately connected with the coming of the Messiah, but that resurrection was of a character very different from the secret, the peaceful, the unimposing reappearance of Jesus after his death. It was an integral, an essential part of that splendid vision which represented the Messiah as summoning all the fathers of the chosen race from their graves to share in the glories of his kingdom (3). Even after the resurrection the bewildered Apostles inquire whether that kingdom, the only sovereignty of which they yet dreamed, was about to commence (4). The death of Jesus, notwithstanding his care to prepare their minds for that appalling event, took them by surprise: they seem to have been stunned and confounded. It had shaken their faith by its utter incongruity with their preconceived notions, rather than confirmed it by its accordance with his own predictions; and in this perplexed and darkling state the resurrection came upon them not less strangely at issue with their conceptions of the manner in which the Messiah would return to the world. When Jesus had alluded with more or less prophetic distinctness to that event, their minds had,

Incredulity of the Apostles: its cause.

(1) It does not appear possible that Peter could be one of the disciples near Emmaus. It would harmonise the accounts if we could suppose that St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 5.) originally dictated Κλάροπα, which was changed for the more familiar name Κηφά.

(2) Mark, xvi. 14—18.; Luke, xxiv. 36—49.; John, xx. 19—29.

(3) See ch. ii, p. 78.

(4) Acts, i. 6. Compare Luke, xxiv. 21.



no doubt, reverted to their rooted opinions on the subject, and moulded up the plain sense of his words with some vague and confused interpretation framed out of their own traditions; the latter so far predominating, that their memory retained scarcely a vestige of the simpler truth, until it was forcibly re-awakened by its complete fulfilment in the resurrection of their Lord.

Excepting among the immediate disciples, the intelligence of the resurrection remained, it is probable, a profound secret, or, at all events, little more than vague and feeble rumours would reach the ear of the Sanhedrin. For though Christ had taken the first step to re-organise his religion, by his solemn commission to the Apostles at his first appearance in their assembly, it was not till after the return to Galilee, more particularly during one interview near the Lake of Gennesareth, that he invested Peter, and with him the rest of the Apostles, with the pastoral charge over his new community. For, according to their custom, the Galilean Apostles had returned to their homes during the interval between the Passover and the Pentecost, and there, among the former scenes of his beneficent labours, on more than one occasion, the living Jesus had appeared, and conversed familiarly with them (1).

Forty days after the crucifixion, and ten before the Pentecost, the Apostles were again assembled at their usual place of resort, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, the village of Bethany. It was here, on the slope of the Mount of Olives, that, in the language of St. Luke, "he was parted from them;" "he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight (2)."

During the interval between the Ascension and the day of Pentecost, the Apostles of Jesus regularly performed their devotions in the Temple, but they may have been lost and unobserved among the thousands who either returned to Jerusalem for the second great annual festival, or if from more remote parts, remained, as was customary, in the capital from the Passover to the Pentecost. The election of a new apostle to fill the mysterious number of twelve, a

(1) Matt. xxviii. 16—20.; John, xxi. 1—23. Mark, in his brief and summary account, omits the journey to Galilee. Luke (xxiv. 49.) seems to intimate the contrary, as if he had known nothing of this retreat. This verse, however, may be a kind of continuation of verse 47, and is not to be taken in this strict sense, so as positively to exclude an intermediate journey to Galilee.

(2) Neander has closed his life of Christ with some forcible observations on the Ascension, to which it has been objected that St. Luke alone, though in two places, Gosp. xxiv. 50, 51.; Acts, i. 9—11., mentions this most extraordinary event. "How could the resurrection of Christ have been to the disciples the groundwork of their belief in everlasting life, if it had been again followed by his death? With the death of Christ the faith, especially in his resurrection and reappearance, must again, of necessity, have sunk away. Christ would again have appeared to them an ordinary man, their belief in him

as the Messiah would have suffered a violent shock. How in this manner could that conviction of the exaltation of Christ have formed itself within them, which we find expressed in their writings with so much force and precision. Though the fact of his ascension, as visible to the senses, is witnessed expressly only by St. Luke, the language of St. John concerning his ascent to the Father, the declarations of all the apostles concerning his exaltation to heaven (see especially the strong expression of St. Mark, xvi. 19. H.M.), presuppose their conviction of his supernatural elevation from the earth, since the notion of his departure from this earthly life in the ordinary manner is thereby altogether excluded. Even if none of the apostolic writers had mentioned this visible and real fact, we might have safely inferred from all which they say of Christ, that in some form or other they presupposed a supernatural exaltation of Christ from this visible earthly world. *Leben Jesu*, p. 656.

number hallowed to Jewish feeling as that of the tribes of their ancestors, shows that they now looked upon themselves again as a permanent body, united by a federal principle, and destined for some ulterior purpose; and it is possible that they might look with eager hope to the feast of Pentecost, the celebration of the delivery of the law on Mount Sinai (1); the birthday as it were of the religious constitution of the Jews, as an epoch peculiarly suited for the reorganisation and reconstruction of the new kingdom of the Messiah.

Election  
of a new  
Apostle.

The Sanhedrin doubtless expected any thing rather than the revival of the religion of Jesus. The guards, who had fled from the sepulchre, had been bribed to counteract any rumour of the resurrection, by charging the disciples with the clandestine removal of the body. The city had been restored to peace, as if no extraordinary event had taken place. The Galileans, the followers of Jesus among the rest, had retired to their native province. In the popular estimation the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship were altogether extinguished by his death. The attempt to reinstate him who had been condemned by the Sanhedrin, and crucified by the Romans, in public reverence and belief, as the promised Redeemer, might have appeared a proceeding so desperate, as could not enter into the most enthusiastic mind. The character of the disciples of Jesus was as little calculated to awaken apprehension. The few richer or more influential persons who had been inclined to embrace his cause, even during his lifetime, had maintained their obnoxious opinions in secret. The ostensible leaders were men of low birth, humble occupations, deficient education, and—no unimportant objection in the mind of the Jews—Galileans. Never indeed was sect so completely centered in the person of its founder: the whole rested on his personal authority, emanated from his personal teaching; and however it might be thought, that some of his sayings might be treasured in the minds of his blind and infatuated adherents; however they might refuse to abandon the hope that he would appear again, as the Messiah; all this delusion would gradually die away, from the want of any leader qualified to take up and maintain a cause so lost and hopeless. Great must have been their astonishment at the intelligence, that the religion of Jesus had reappeared, in a new, in a more attractive form; that on the feast day which next followed their total dispersion, those humble, ignorant, and despised Galileans were making converts by thousands, at the very gates, even perhaps within the precincts of the Temple. The more visible circumstances of the miracle which took place on the day of Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Ghost, under the appearance of fiery tongues, in the private assembly of the Christians, might not reach

Reappear-  
ance of  
the reli-  
gion of  
Jesus.

(1) See the traditions on this subject in Menschen N. T., a Talmude illustratum, p. 740

their ears ; but they could not long remain ignorant of this strange and alarming fact, that these uneducated men, apparently reorganised, and acting with the most fearless freedom, were familiarly conversing with, and inculcating the belief in the resurrection of Jesus, on strangers from every quarter of the world, in all their various languages, or dialects (1).

The Jews whose families had been long domiciliated in the different provinces of the Roman and the Parthian dominions, gradually lost, or had never learned, the vernacular tongue of Palestine ; they adopted the language of the surrounding people. The original sacred Hebrew was understood only by the learned. How far, on one side the Greek, on the other the Babylonian Chaldaic, which was nearly allied to the vernacular Aramaic, were admitted into the religious services of the synagogue, appears uncertain ; but the different synagogues in Jerusalem were appropriated to the different races of Jews. Those from Alexandria, from Cyrene, the Libertines, descended from freed slaves at Rome, perhaps therefore speaking Latin, the Cilicians and Asiatics, had their separate places of assembly (2) : so, probably, those who came from more remote quarters, where Greek, the universal medium of communication in great part of the Roman empire, was less known, as in Arabia, Mesopotamia, and beyond the Euphrates.

Disciples  
near the  
Temple.  
Gift of  
tongues.

The scene of this extraordinary incident must have been some place of general resort ; yet, scarcely within the Temple, where, though there were many chambers set apart for instruction in the law and other devotional purposes, the Apostles were not likely to have obtained admittance to one of these, or to have been permitted to carry on their teaching without interruption. If conjecture might be hazarded, we should venture to place their house of assembly in one of the streets leading to the Temple ; that, perhaps, which, descending the slope of the hill, led to the Mount of Olives, and to the village of Bethany. The time, the third hour, nine in the morning, was that of public prayer in the Temple ; multitudes, therefore, would throng all the avenues to the Temple, and would be arrested on their way by the extraordinary sight of Peter and his colleagues thus addressing the various classes in their different dialects ; asserting openly the resurrection of Jesus ; arraigning the injustice of his judicial murder ; and re-establishing his claim to be received as the Messiah.

These submissive, timid, and scattered followers of Jesus thus burst upon the public attention, suddenly invested with courage, endowed with commanding eloquence, in the very scene of their master's cruel apprehension and execution, asserting his Messiah-

(1) Kuinoel (in loc. Act.) gives a lucid view of the various rationalist and anti-rationalist interpretations of this miracle.

(2) Acts, vi.



ship, in a form as irreconcilable with their own preconceived notions, as with those of the rest of the people; arraiguing the rulers, and, by implication, if not as yet in distinct words, the whole nation, of the most heinous act of impiety, as well as barbarity, the rejection of the Messiah; proclaiming the resurrection, and defying investigation. The whole speech of Peter clashed with the strongest prejudices of those who had so short a time before given such fearful evidence of their animosity and remorselessness. It proclaimed that “the last days,” the days of the Messiah, the days of prophecy and wonder, had already begun. It placed the Being whom but forty days before they had seen helplessly expiring upon the cross, far above the pride almost the idol of the nation, King David. The ashes of the king had long reposed in the tomb, which was before their eyes; but the tomb could not confine Jesus; death had no power over his remains. Nor was his resurrection all: the crucified Jesus was now “on the right hand of God:” he had assumed that last, the highest distinction of the Messiah—the superhuman majesty; that intimate relation with the Deity, which, however vaguely and indistinctly shadowed out in the Jewish notion of the Messiah, was as it were the crowning glory, the ultimate height to which the devout hopes of the most strongly excited of the Jews followed up the promised Redeemer: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and Christ (1).”

Speech of  
Peter.

Three thousand declared converts were the result of this first appeal to the Jewish multitude: the religion thus reappeared in a form new, complete, and more decidedly hostile to the prevailing creed and dominant sentiments of the nation. From this time the Christian community assumed its separate and organised existence, united by the federal rite of baptism; and the popular mind was deeply impressed by the preternatural powers exercised by its leading followers. Many of the converts threw their property, or part of it, into a common stock; now become necessary, as the teachers of Christianity had to take up their permanent residence in Jerusalem, at a distance from their homes and the scenes of their humble labours. The religion spread of course, with the greatest rapidity among the lower orders. Assistance in their wants, and protection against the hostility, or at least the coldness and estrangement, of the powerful and opulent, were necessary to hold together the young society. Such was the general ardour, that many did not hesitate to sell their landed property, the tenure of which, however loosened by time, and by the successive changes in the political state of the country, probably, at this period of the Messiah's expected coming, assumed a new value. This therefore,

(1) Acts, ii. 36.

Common  
fund not  
commu-  
nity of  
goods.

was no easy triumph over Jewish feeling. Yet nothing like an Essenian community of goods ever appears to have prevailed in the Christian community; such a system, however favourable to the maintenance of certain usages or opinions within a narrow sphere, would have been fatal to the aggressive and comprehensive spirit of Christianity, the vital and conservative principle of a sect, it was inconsistent with an universal religion and we cannot but admire the wisdom which avoided a precedent so attractive, as conducing to the immediate prosperity, yet so dangerous to the ultimate progress of the religion (1).

Conduct  
of the  
Sanhe-  
drin.

The Sanhedrin at first stood aloof; whether from awe, or miscalculating contempt, or, it is possible, from internal dissension. It was not till they were assailed, as it were in the heart of their own territory; not till the miracle of healing the lame man near the Beautiful gate of the Temple (this gate opened into the inner court of the Temple, and, from the richness of its architecture, had received that name), and the public proclamation of the resurrection, in the midst of the assembled worshippers, in the second recorded speech of Peter, had secured five thousand converts; that at length the authorities found it necessary to interfere, and to arrest, if possible, the rapid progress of the faith. The second speech of the Apostle (2) was in a somewhat more calm and conciliating tone than the former: it dwelt less on the crime of the crucifixion, than on the advantages of belief in Jesus as the Messiah. It did not shrink, indeed, from reasserting the guilt of the death of the Just One; yet it palliated the ignorance through which the people, and even the rulers, had rejected Jesus, and stained the city with his blood. It called upon them to repent of this national crime; and, as if even yet Peter himself was not disencumbered of that Jewish notion, it seemed to intimate the possibility of an immediate reappearance of Christ (3), to fulfil to the Jewish people all that they hoped from this greater than Moses, this accomplisher of the sublime promise made to their Father Abraham. To the Sanhedrin, the speech was, no doubt, but vaguely reported; but any speech delivered by such men, in such a place, and on such a subject, demanded their interference. Obtaining the assistance of the commander of the Roman guard, mounted, as has been said, in the gallery leading to the Antonia, they seized and imprisoned the Apostles. The next morning they were brought up for examination. The boldness of the Apostles, who asserted their

Second  
speech of  
Peter.

(1) Mosheim appears to me to have proved this point conclusively. At a later period, every exhortation to almsgiving, and every sentence which alludes to distinctions of rich and poor in the Christian community, is decisive against the community of goods.

(2) Acts. iii. 12-26.

(3) V. 20, 21: "The time of refreshing; when

he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things." This restitution of all things, in the common Jewish belief, was to be almost simultaneous with or to follow very closely the appearance of the Messiah.

doctrines with calm resolution, avowed and enforced their belief in the resurrection and Messiahship of the crucified Jesus, as well as the presence of the man who had been healed, perplexed the council. After a private conference, they determined to try the effect of severe threatenings, and authoritatively commanded them to desist from disseminating their obnoxious opinions. The Apostles answered by an appeal to a higher power—"Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (1)."

A remarkable revolution had taken place, either in the internal politics of the Sanhedrin, or in their prevailing sentiments towards Christianity. Up to the death of Jesus, the Pharisees were his chief opponents; against their authority he seemed chiefly to direct his rebukes; and, by their jealous animosity, he was watched, criminated, and at length put to death. Now in their turn, the Sadducees (2) take the lead; either because the doctrine of the resurrection struck more directly at the root of their system, or, otherwise, because their influence had gained a temporary ascendancy in the great council. But this predominance of the unpopular Sadducean party, on the throne of the High Priest, and in the council, if it increased their danger from the well-known severity with which that faction administered the law; on the other hand, it powerfully contributed to that reaction of popular favour, which again overawed the hostile Sanhedrin (3). This triumph over their adversaries; this resolute determination to maintain their cause at all hazards (sanctioned, as it seemed, by the manifest approval of the Almighty); the rapid increase in their possessions, which enabled them to protect all the poorer classes who joined their ranks; the awful death of Ananias and Sapphira (4), into the circumstances of which their enemies ventured no inquiry; the miracles of a gentler and more beneficent character, which they performed in public; the concourse from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem to partake in their powers of healing, and to hear their doctrines; the manifest superiority, in short, which Christianity was gaining over the established Judaism, determined the Sanhedrin, after a short time, to make another effort to suppress their growing power. The Apostles were seized, and cast ignominiously into the common prison. In the morning they were sought in vain: the doors were found closed, but the prisoners had disappeared;

Sadducees  
predominant  
in the  
Sanhedrin.

(1) Acts, iv. 19, 20.

(2) Acts, iv. 1. Annas is mentioned as the high priest, and then Caiaphas, who it appears, from the Gospels, and from Josephus (Ant. xviii. 2. 2., 4. 3.), was not deposed till a later period. The interpretation of Krebs. (Observations in N. T., c Josepho, p. 177.), appears to me the best. Annas was the second high priest, or deputy; but is named first, as the head of the family

in which the high priesthood was vested, being father-in-law to Caiaphas. The rest were the assessors of the high priest.

(3) "They let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them *because of the people*: for all men glorified God for that which was done" Acts, iv, 21.

(4) Acts, v.



Apostles  
before the  
Sanhedrin.

and the dismayed Sanhedrin received intelligence that they had taken up their customary station in the Temple. Even the Roman officer, despatched to secure their persons, found it necessary to act with caution and gentleness; for the multitude were ready to undertake their defence, even against the armed soldiery; and stones were always at hand in the neighbourhood or precincts of the Temple, for any tumultuary resistance. The Apostles, however, peaceably obeyed the citation of the Sanhedrin; but the language of Peter was now even more bold and resolute than before: he openly proclaimed, in the face of the astonished council, the crucified Jesus to be the Prince and the Saviour, and asserted the inspiration of himself and his companions by the Spirit of God (1).

Gamaliel.

The Sadducaic faction were wrought to the highest pitch of frenzy; they were eager to press the capital charge. But the Pharisaic party endeavoured, not without success, to mitigate the sentence. The perpetual rivalry of the two sects, and the general leniency of the Pharisaic administration of the law, may have concurred, with the moderation and judgment of the individual, to induce Gamaliel to interpose the weight of his own personal authority and that of his party. Gamaliel does not appear, himself, to have been inclined to Christianity: he was most likely the same who is distinguished in Jewish tradition as president of the Sanhedrin, (though the High Priest, being now present, would take the chief place,) and as the master under whom St. Paul had studied the Law. The speech of Gamaliel, with singular address, confounded the new sect with those of two adventurers, Judas the Galilean, and Theudas, whose insurrections had excited great expectation, but gradually died away. With these, affairs were left to take their course; against their pretensions God had decided by their failure: leave, then, to the same unerring Judge the present decision.

To this temporising policy the majority of the council assented; part probably considering, that either the sect would, after all, die away, without establishing any permanent influence, or, like some of those parties mentioned by Gamaliel, run into wild excess, and so provoke the Roman government to suppress them by force; others from mere party spirit, to counteract the power of the opposite faction; some from more humane principles and kindlier motives; others from perplexity; some, perhaps, from awe, which, though it had not yet led to belief, had led to hesitation; some from sincere piety; as, in fact, expecting that an event of such importance would be decided by some manifest interposition, or overruling influence at least, of the Almighty. The majority were anxious, from these different motives, to escape the perilous re-

(1) Acts, v. 32.

sponsibility of decision. The less violent course was therefore followed; after the apostles had suffered the milder punishment of scourging; a punishment inflicted with great frequency among the Jews, yet ignominious to the sufferer; the persecution, for the present, ceased: the Apostles again appeared in public; they attended in the Temple; but how long this period of security lasted, from the uncertain chronology of the early Christian history (1), it is impossible to decide. Yet, as the jealousies which appear to have arisen in the infant community, would require some time to mature and grow to head, we should interpose two or three years between this collision with the authorities and the next which first embroiled the soil of Jerusalem with the blood of a Christian martyr. Nor would the peaceful policy adopted through the authority of Gamaliel have had a fair trial in a shorter period of time; it would scarcely have been overborne at once and immediately by the more violent party.

The first converts to Christianity were Jews (2), but of two distinct classes:—1, the natives of Palestine, who spoke the Syrian dialect, and among whom perhaps were included the Jews from the East; 2, the Western Jews, who having been settled in the different provinces of the Roman empire, generally spoke Greek. This class may likewise have comprehended proselytes to Judaism. Jealousies arose between these two parties. The Greeks complained that the distribution of the general charitable fund was conducted with partiality, that their “widows were neglected.” The dispute led to the establishment of a new order in the community. The Apostles withdrew from the laborious, it might be the invidious, office; and seven disciples, from whose names we may conjecture that they were chosen from the Grecian party, were invested by a solemn ceremony, the imposition of hands, as deacons or ministers, with the superintendence of the general funds.

Institution  
of Deacons.

It was in the synagogues of the foreign, the African and Asiatic Jews, that the success of Stephen, one of these deacons, excited the most violent hostility. The indignant people found that not even the priesthood was a security against this spreading apos-

A. D. 34.

(1) There is no certain date in the Acts of the Apostles, except that of the death of Herod, A.D. 44., even if that is certain. Nothing can be more easy than to array against each other the names of the most learned authorities, who from the earliest days have laboured to build a durable edifice out of the insufficient materials in their power. Perhaps from Jerom to Dr. Burton and Mr. Greswell, no two systems agree. The passage in St. Paul, Gal. ii. 1., which might be expected to throw light on this difficult subject, involves it in still greater intricacy. In the first place, the reading, fourteen years, as Grotius and many others have shown, not without MS. authority, is by no means certain. Then, from whence is this period to be calculated?—from

the conversion, with Pearson and many modern writers? or from the first visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem, with others? All is doubtful, contested, conjectural. The only plan, therefore, is to adopt, and uniformly adhere to, some one system. In fact the cardinal point of the whole calculation, the year of our Saviour's death, being as uncertain as the rest, we shall state, that we assume that to have been A. D. 31. From thence we shall proceed to affix our dates according to our own view, without involving our readers in the inextricable labyrinth to which we are convinced that there is no certain or satisfactory clue. If we notice any arguments, they will be chiefly of an historical nature.

(2) Acts, vi.

tasy : many of that order enrolled themselves among the disciples of Christ(1). Whether the execution of this first martyr to Christianity was a legal or tumultuary proceeding,—whether it was a solemn act of the Sanhedrin, the supreme judicial as well as civil tribunal of the nation, or an outbreak of popular indignation and resentment,—the preliminary steps at least, appear to have been conducted with regularity. He was formally arraigned before the Sanhedrin, of blasphemy, as asserting the future destruction of the Temple, and the abrogation of the Law. This accusation, although the witnesses are said to have been false and suborned, seems to intimate, that in those Hellenistic congregations Christianity had already assumed a bolder and more independent tone ; that it had thrown aside some of the peculiar character which adhered to it in the other communities ; that it already aspired to be an universal, not a national religion ; and one destined to survive the local worship in Jerusalem, and the abolition of the Mosaic institutes (2). Whether inflamed by these popular topics of accusation, which struck at the vital principle of their religious influence, or again taking alarm at the progress of Christianity, the Pharisaic party, which we found after the resurrection had lost their supremacy in the council, appear, from the active concurrence of Saul, and from the re-awakened hostility of the multitude, over whom the Sadducees had no commanding influence, to have re-united themselves to the more violent enemies of the faith. The defence of Stephen recapitulated in bold language the chief points of the national history, the privileges and the crimes of the race of Israel, which gradually led to this final consummation of their impiety and guilt, the rejection of the Messiah, the murder of the Just One. It is evidently incomplete ; it was interrupted by the fury of his opponents, who took fire at his arraigning them, not merely of the death of Jesus, but of this perpetual violation of the Law ; “ who have received the *law* by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it (3).” This charge struck directly at the Pharisaic party ; the populace ever under their control, either abandoned the Christians to their fate, or joined in the hasty and ruthless vengeance. The murmurs, the gestures of the indignant Sanhedrin, and of others, perhaps, who witnessed the trial, betrayed their impatience and indignation : they gnashed their teeth ; and Stephen breaking off, or unable to pursue his continuous discourse, in a kind of prophetic ecstasy declared that at that instant he beheld the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. Whether legal or tumultuary, the execution of Stephen was conducted with so much attention to form,

(1) Acts, vi. 7.

(2) Stephen has been called by some modern writers the forerunner of St. Paul. See Neander ; *Geschichte der Pflanzung der Christlichen Kirche*,

p. 41. ; a work which I had not the advantage of consulting, when this part of the present volume was written.

(3) Acts, vii. 53.



that he was first carried beyond the walls of the city (1); the witnesses, whose office it was to cast the first stone (2), put off their clothes, and perhaps observed the other forms peculiar to this mode of execution. He died as a true follower of Jesus, praying the divine mercy upon his barbarous persecutors; but neither the sight of his sufferings, nor the beauty of his dying words, allayed the excitement which had now united the conflicting parties of the Jews in their common league against Christianity. Yet the mere profession of Christianity did not necessarily involve any capital charge; or if it did, the Jews wanted power to carry the sentence of death into execution on a general scale (3). Though then they had either deliberately ventured, or yielded to a violent impulse of fury, on this occasion, their vengeance in other cases was confined to those subordinate punishments which were left under their jurisdiction;—imprisonment; public scourging in the synagogue; and that which, of course, began to lose its terrors as soon as the Christians formed separate and independent communities, the once awful Excommunication.

Death of  
the proto-  
martyr.  
A. D. 34.

The martyrdom of Stephen led to the most important results, not merely as first revealing that great lesson which mankind has been so slow to learn, that religious persecution which stops short of extermination, always advances the cause which it endeavours to repress. It showed that Christian faith was stronger than death, the last resort of human cruelty. Thenceforth its triumph was secure. For every death, courageously, calmly, cheerfully endured, where it appalled one dastard into apostasy, made, or prepared the minds of a hundred proselytes. To the Jew, ready himself to lay down his life in defence of his Temple, this self-devotion, though an undeniable test of sincerity in the belief of facts of recent occurrence, was less extraordinary; to the heathen it showed a determined assurance of immortality, not less new, as an active and generally principle, than attractive and ennobling.

The more immediate consequences of the persecution were no less favourable to the progress of Christianity. The Christians were driven out of Jerusalem, where the Apostles alone remained firm at their posts. Scattered through the whole region, if not beyond the precincts of Palestine, they bore with them the seed of the religion. The most important progress was made in Samaria: but the extent of their success in this region, and the opposition they encountered

(1) In one instance, it may be remembered, the multitude was so excited as to attempt to stone our Saviour within the precincts of the Temple.

(2) Deut. xvii. 7.

(3) Michaelis, followed by Eichhorn, has argued, with considerable plausibility, that these violent measures would scarcely have been ventured by the Jews under the rigorous administration of Pilate. Vitellius, on the other hand, by whom Pilate was sent in disgrace to Rome,

A. D. 36, visited Jerusalem A. D. 37, was received with great honours, and seems to have treated the Jewish authorities with the utmost respect. On these grounds he places this persecution as late as the year 37. Yet the government of Pilate appears to have been capriciously, rather than systematically severe. The immediate occasion of his recall, was his tyrannical conduct to the Samaritans. It may have been his policy, while his administration was drawing to a close, to court the ruling authorities of the Jews.

among this people, deeply tinged with Oriental opinion, will be related in another part of this work. Philip, one of the most active of the deacons, made another convert of rank and importance, an officer (1) who held the highest station and influence with Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. The name of Candace (2) was the hereditary appellation of the queens of Meroe, as Pharaoh of the older, and Ptolemy of the later Egyptian kings. The Jews had spread in great numbers to that region; and the return of a person of such influence, a declared convert to the new religion, can scarcely have been without consequences, of which, unhappily, we have no record.

Paul of  
Tarsus.

But far the most important result of the death of Stephen, was its connection with the conversion of St. Paul. To propagate Christianity in the enlightened West, where its most extensive, at least, most permanent, conquests were to be made; to emancipate it from the trammels of Judaism; a man was wanting of larger and more comprehensive views, of higher education, and more liberal accomplishments. Such an instrument for its momentous scheme of benevolence to the human race, Divine Providence found in Saul of Tarsus. Born in the Grecian and commercial town of Tarsus, where he had acquired no inconsiderable acquaintance with Grecian letters and philosophy; but brought up in the most celebrated school of Pharisaic learning, that of Gamaliel, for which purpose he had probably resided long in Jerusalem; having inherited, probably from the domiciliation of his family in Tarsus (3), the valuable privilege of Roman citizenship; yet with his Judaism in no degree weakened by his Grecian culture, — Saul stood as it were on the confines of both regions, qualified beyond all men to develop a system which should unite Jew and Gentile under one more harmonious and comprehensive faith. The zeal with which Saul urged on the subsequent persecution, showed that the death of Stephen had made, as might have been expected, no influential impression upon a mind so capable, unless blinded by zeal, of appreciating its moral sublimity. The commission from the Sanhedrin, to bring in safe custody to Jerusalem such of the Jews of Damascus as had embraced Christianity, implies their unabated reliance on his fidelity. The national confidence which invested him in this important office, the unhesitating readiness with which he appears to have assumed it, in a man of his apparently severe integrity, and unshaken sense of duty, imply, in all ordinary human estimation,

(1) The word "Eunuch" may be here used in its primary sense (cubicularius), without any allusion to its later meaning; as, according to the strict rites of the law, a Jewish eunuch was disqualified from appearing at the public assemblies.

(2) *Begnare feminam Candacen, quod nomen multis jam annis ad reginas transit.* Plin. vi. 29. Conf. Strabo, xvii. p. 1175. Dio. Cass. liv.

(3) Compare Strabo's account of Tarsus. The natives of this city were remarkably addicted to philosophical studies; but in general travelled and settled in foreign countries: Οὐδ' αὐτοὶ οὗτοι μένουσιν αὐτόθι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τελευτοῦνται ἐκδημοῦντες, καὶ τελευθεῖντες ξενιτεύουσιν ἡδεῶς, κατέρχονται δ' ὀλίγοι. — Strabo, lib. xiv. p. 673.

that he had in no degree relaxed from that zeal which induced him to witness the execution of Stephen, if not with stern satisfaction, yet without commiseration. Even then, if the mind of Paul was in any degree prepared, by the noble manner in which Stephen had endured death, to yield to the miraculous interposition which occurred on the road to Damascus, nothing less than some occurrence of the most extraordinary and unprecedented character could have arrested so suddenly, and diverted so completely from its settled purpose, a mind of so much strength, and however of vivid imagination, to all appearance very superior to popular superstition. Saul set forth from Jerusalem, according to the narrative of the Acts, with his mind wrought up to the most violent animosity against these apostates from the faith of their ancestors (1). He set forth, thus manifestly inveterate in his prejudices, unshaken in his ardent attachment to the religion of Moses, the immutability and perpetuity of which he considered it treasonable and impious to question, with an austere and indignant sense of duty, fully authorised by the direct testimony of the Law, to exterminate all renegades from the severest Judaism. The ruling Jews must have heard with the utmost amazement, that the persecuting zealot who had voluntarily demanded the commission of the High Priest to repress the growing sect of the Christians, had arrived at Damascus, blinded for a time, humbled, and that his first step had been openly to join himself to that party which he had threatened to exterminate.

The Christians, far from welcoming so distinguished a proselyte, looked on him at first with natural mistrust and suspicion. And although at Damascus this jealousy was speedily allayed by the interposition of Ananias, a leading Christian, to whom his conversion had been revealed by a vision, at Jerusalem his former hostile violence had made so deep an impression, that, three years after his conversion, even the Apostles stood aloof, and with reluctance admitted a proselyte of such importance, yet whose conversion to them still appeared so highly improbable.

No event in Christian history, from this improbability, as well as its influence on the progress of the religion, would so demand, if the expression may be used, the divine intervention as the conversion of St. Paul. Paul was essentially necessary to the development of the Christian scheme. Neither the self-suggested workings of the imagination, even if coincident with some extraordinary but fortuitous atmospheric phenomena; nor any worldly notion of aggrandisement, as the head of a new and powerful sect; nor that more noble ambition, which might anticipate the moral and social blessings of Christianity, and, once conceived, would strike resolutely into the scheme for their advancement,—furnish even a plau-

(1) "Breathing threatenings and slaughter, against the disciples of the Lord." Acts ix. 1—22.



sible theory for the total change of such a man, at such a time, and under such circumstances. The minute investigation of this much agitated question could scarcely be in its place in the present work. But to doubt, in whatever manner it took place, the divine mission of Paul, would be to discard all providential interposition in the design and propagation of Christianity.

Unquestionably it is remarkable how little encouragement Paul seems at first to have received from the party, to join which he had sacrificed all his popularity with his countrymen, the favour of the supreme magistracy, and a charge, if of severe and cruel, yet of an important character; all, indeed, which hitherto appeared the ruling objects of his life. Instead of assuming at once, as his abilities and character might seem to command, a distinguished place in the new community into which he had been received; instead of being hailed, as renegades from the opposite faction usually are, by a weak and persecuted party, his early course is lost in obscurity. He passes several years in exile, as it were, from both parties; he emerges by slow degrees into eminence, and hardly wins his way into the reluctant confidence of the Christians; who, however they might at first be startled by the improbability of the fact, yet felt such reliance in the power of their Lord and Redeemer, as scarcely we should have conceived to be affected by lasting wonder at the conversion of any unbeliever.

Part of the three years which elapsed between the conversion of Paul and his first visit to Jerusalem, were passed in Arabia (1). The cause of this retirement into a foreign region, and the part of the extensive country, which was then called Arabia, in which he resided, are altogether unknown. It is possible, indeed, that he may have sought refuge from the Jews of Damascus, or employed himself in the conversion of the Jews who were scattered in great numbers in every part of Arabia. The frontiers of the Arabian king bordered closely on the territory of Damascus, and Paul may have retired but a short distance from that city. During this interval, Aretas, whose hostile intentions against Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, Vitellius, the prefect of Syria, had made preparations to repress, had the boldness to invade the Syrian prefecture, and to sieze the important city of Damascus. It is difficult to conceive this act of aggression to have been hazarded unless at some period of public confusion, such as took place at the death of Tiberius. According to Josephus, Vitellius, who had collected a great force to invest Petra, the capital of the Arabian king, on the first tidings of that event, instantly suspended his operations, and withdrew his troops into their winter quarters. At all events, at the close of these three

Paul in  
Arabia.

(1) The time of St. Paul's residence in Arabia is generally assumed to have been one whole year, and part of the preceding and the follow-

ing. The expression in the Epist. to the Galatians, (i. 17, 18.) appears to me by no means to require this arrangement.

years Damascus was in the power of Aretas. The Jews, who probably were under the authority of an ethnarch of their own people, obtained sufficient influence with the Arabian governor to carry into effect their designs against the life of Paul (1). His sudden apostasy from their cause, his extraordinary powers, his ardent zeal, his unexampled success, had wrought their animosity to this deadly height; and Paul was with difficulty withdrawn from their fury by being let down from the walls in a basket, the gates being carefully guarded by the command of the Arabian governor.

Among the most distinguished of the first converts was Barnabas, a native of Cyprus, who had contributed largely from his possessions in that island to the common fund; and whose commanding character and abilities gave him great influence. When Paul, after his escape from Damascus, arrived at Jerusalem, so imperfect appears to have been the correspondence between the more remote members of the Christian community, (possibly from Damascus and its neighbourhood having been the seat of war, or because Paul had past considerable part of the three years in almost total seclusion), at all events, such was the obscurity of the whole transaction, that no certain intelligence of so extraordinary an event as his conversion had reached the apostolic body, or rather Peter and James, the only Apostles then resident in Jerusalem (2). Barnabas alone espoused his cause, removed the timid suspicions of the Apostles, and Paul was admitted into the reluctant Christian community. As peculiarly skilled in the Greek language, his exertions to advance Christianity were particularly addressed to those of the Jews to whom Greek was vernacular. But a new conspiracy again endangering his life, he was carried away by the care of his friends to Cæsarea, and thence proceeded to his native city of Tarsus (3).

About this time a more urgent and immediate danger than the progress of Christianity occupied the mind of the Jewish people. The very existence of their religion was threatened, for the frantic Caligula had issued orders to place his statue in the Temple at Jerusalem. The historian of the Jews must relate the negotiations, the petitions, the artful and humane delays interposed by the prefect Petronius, and all the incidents which show how deeply and universally the nation was absorbed by this appalling subject (4). It caused, no doubt, as it were a diversion in favour of the Christians; and the temporary peace enjoyed by the churches is attributed, with great probability, rather to the fears of the Jews for their own religious independence, than to the relaxation of their hostility against the Christians (5).

Persecu-  
tion of the  
Jews by  
Caligula.

(1) Acts, ix. 23.

(2) Acts, ix. 20.

(3) Acts, ix. 30.

(4) Joseph., Ant. xvlii. 8. History of the Jews, ii. 178. 186.

(5) Benson (Hist. of first planting of Christianity) and Lardner take this view.

A. D.  
39-41.

This peace was undisturbed for about three years (1). The Apostles pursued their office of disseminating the Gospel in every part of Judæa, until Herod Agrippa took possession of the hereditary dominions, which had been partly granted by the favour of Caligula, and were secured by the gratitude of Claudius. Herod Agrippa affected the splendour of his grandfather, the first Herod; but, unlike him, he attempted to ingratiate himself with his subjects by the strictest profession of Judaism (2). His power appears to have been as despotic as that of his ancestor; and, at the instigation, no doubt, of the leading Jews, he determined to take vigorous measures for the suppression of Christianity. James, the brother of St. John, was the first victim. He appears to have been summarily put to death by the military mandate of the king, without any process of the Jewish law (3). The Jews rejoiced, no doubt, that the uncontrolled power of life and death was again restored to one who assumed the character of a national king. They were no longer restrained by the caprice, the justice, or the humanity of a Roman prefect, who might treat their intolerance with contempt or displeasure; and they were encouraged in the hope, that at the same great Festival, during which some years before they had extorted the death of Jesus from the reluctant Pilate, their new king would more readily lend himself to their revenge against his most active and powerful follower. Peter was cast into prison, perhaps with the intention of putting him to death before the departure of Herod from the capital. He was delivered from his bondage by supernatural intervention (4). If the author of the Acts has preserved the order of time, two other of the most important adherents of Christianity ran considerable danger. The famine, predicted by Agabus at Antioch, commenced in Judæa, in the fourth year of Claudius, the last of Herod Agrippa. If, then, Barnabas and Paul proceeded to Jerusalem on their charitable mission to bear the contributions of the Christians in Antioch to their poorer brethren in Judæa (5), they must have arrived there during the height of the persecution. Either they remained in concealment, or the extraordinary circumstances of the escape of Peter from prison so confounded the king and his advisers, notwithstanding their attempt to prove the connivance of the guards, to which the lives of the miserable men were sacrificed, that for a time, the violence of the persecution was suspended, and those who would inevitably have been its next victims, obtained, as it were, a temporary respite.

Death of  
James.

A. D. 44.

Death of  
Herod.

The death of Herod, during the same year, delivered the Christians from their determined enemy. In its terrific and repulsive

(1) Acts, ix. 31. From 39 to 41, the year of Caligula's death.

(2) Hist. of Jews, ii. 192. 196.

(3) Blasphemy was the only crime of which he could be accused, and stoning was the ordi-

nary mode of execution for that offence. James was cut off by the sword.

(4) Acts, xii. 1—23.

(5) Acts, xi. 30.



circumstances they could not but behold the hand of their protecting God. In this respect alone differ the Jewish and the Christian historian, Josephus and the writer of the Acts. In the appalling suddenness of his seizure, in the midst of his splendour and the impious adulations of his court, and in the loathsome nature of the disease, their accounts fully coincide.

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## CHAPTER II.

### CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM.

CHRISTIANITY had now made rapid and extensive progress throughout the Jewish world. The death and resurrection of Jesus; the rise of a new religious community, which proclaimed the Son of Mary to be the Messiah, taking place on a scene so public as the metropolis, and at the period of the general concourse of the nation, must have been rumoured, more or less obscurely, in the most remote parts of the Roman Empire, and eastward as far as the extreme settlements of the Jews. If the religion may not have been actually embraced by any of those pilgrims from the more distant provinces, who happened to be present during the great festivals, yet its seeds may have been already widely scattered. The dispersion of the community during the persecution after the death of Stephen, carried many zealous and ardent converts into the adjacent regions of Syria and the island of Cyprus. It had obtained a permanent establishment at Antioch, where the community first received the distinctive appellation of Christians.

Progress  
of Chris-  
tianity.

Christianity however, as yet, was but an expanded Judaism; it was preached by Jews; it was addressed to Jews. It was limited, national, exclusive. The race of Israel gradually recognising in Jesus of Nazareth the promised Messiah; superinducing, as it were, the exquisite purity of Evangelic morality upon the strict performance of the moral law; redeemed from the sins of their fathers and from their own by Christ; assured of the resurrection to eternal life; the children of Abraham were still to stand alone and separate from the rest of mankind, sole possessors of the divine favour, sole inheritors of God's everlasting promises. There can be no doubt that they still looked for the speedy, if not the immediate, consummation of all things; the Messiah had as yet performed but part of his office; he was to come again, at no distant period, to accomplish all which was wanting to the established belief in his mission. His visible, his worldly kingdom was to commence; he had passed his ordeal of trial, of suffering, and of sacrifice; the same age, and the

same people were to behold him in his triumph, in his glory, and even, some self-deemed and self-named Christians would not hesitate to aver, in his revenge. At the head of his elect of Israel, he was to assume his dominion; and if his dominion was to be founded upon a still more rigid principle of exclusion than that of one favoured race, it entered not into the most remote expectation, that it could be formed on a wider plan, unless, perhaps, in favour of the few who should previously have acknowledged the divine legislation of Moses, and sued for and obtained admission among the hereditary descendants of Abraham. Nothing is more remarkable than to see the horizon of the Apostles gradually receding, and instead of resting on the borders of the Holy Land, comprehending at length the whole world; barrier after barrier falling down before the superior wisdom which was infused into their minds; first the proselytes of the gate, the foreign conformists to Judaism, and ere long the Gentiles themselves admitted within the pale; until Christianity stood forth, demanded the homage, and promised its rewards to the faith of the whole human race; proclaimed itself in language which the world had as yet never heard, the one, true, universal religion.

Gradual  
enlarge-  
ment of  
the views  
of the  
Apostles.

Christia-  
nity, an  
universal  
religion.

As an universal religion, aspiring to the complete moral conquest of the world, Christianity had to encounter three antagonists, Judaism, Paganism, and Orientalism. It is our design successively to exhibit the conflict with these opposing forces, its final triumph not without detriment to its own native purity and its divine simplicity, from the interworking of the yet unsubdued elements of the former systems into the Christian mind; until each, at successive periods, and in different parts of the world, formed a modification of Christianity equally removed from its unmingled and unsullied original: the Judæo-Christianity of Palestine, of which the Ebionites appear to have been the last representatives; the Platonic Christianity of Alexandria, as, at least at this early period, the new religion could coalesce only with the sublimer and more philosophical principles of Paganism; and, lastly, the Gnostic Christianity of the East.

External  
conflict of  
Christia-  
nity with  
Judaism;

and in-  
ternal.

With Judaism Christianity had to maintain a double conflict: one external, with the Judaism of the Temple, the Synagogue, the Sanhedrin; a contest of authority on one side, and the irrepressible spirit of moral and religious liberty on the other; of fierce intolerance against the stubborn endurance of conscientious faith; of relentless persecution against the calm and death-despising, or often death-seeking, heroism of martyrdom: the other, more dangerous and destructive, the Judaism of the infant Church; the old prejudices and opinions, which even Christianity could not altogether extirpate or correct in the earlier Jewish proselytes; the perpetual tendency to contract again the expanding circle; the enslavement

of Christianity to the provisions of the Mosaic law, and the spirit of the antiquated religion of Palestine. Until the first steps were taken to throw open the new religion to mankind at large; until Christianity, it may be said without disparagement, from a Jewish sect assumed the dignity of an independant religion, even the external animosity of Judaism had not reached its height. But the successive admission of the proselytes of the gate, and at length of the idolatrous Gentiles, into an equal participation in the privileges of the faith, showed that the breach was altogether irreparable. From that period the two systems stood in direct and irreconcilable opposition. To the eye of the Jew the Christian became, from a rebellious and heretical son, an irreclaimable apostate; and to the Christian the temporary designation of Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews, was merged in the more sublime title, the Redeemer of the world.

The same measures rendered the internal conflict with the lingering Judaism within the Church more violent and desperate. Its dying struggles, as it were, to maintain its ground, rent, for some time, the infant community with civil divisions. But the predominant influx of Gentile converts gradually obtained the ascendancy; Judaism slowly died out in the great body of the Church, and the Judæo-Christian sects in the East languished, and at length expired in obscurity.

Divine Providence had armed the religion of Christ with new powers adapted to the change in its situation and design, both for resistance against the more violent animosity, which was exasperated by its growing success, and for aggression upon the ignorance, the vice, and the misery, which it was to enlighten, to purify, or to mitigate. Independent of the supernatural powers occasionally displayed by the Apostles, the accession of two men so highly gifted with natural abilities, as well as with all the peculiar powers conferred on the first Apostles of Christianity, the enrolment of Barnabas and Paul in the Apostolic body, showed that for the comprehensive system about to be developed instruments were wanting of a different character from the humble and uninstructed peasants of Galilee. However extraordinary the change wrought in the minds of the earlier Apostles by the spirit of Christianity; however some of them, especially Peter and John, may have extended their labours beyond the precincts of Palestine, yet Paul appears to have exercised by far the greatest influence, not merely in the conversion of the Gentiles, but in emancipating the Christianity of the Jewish converts from the inveterate influence of their old religion.

Yet the first step towards the more comprehensive system was made by Peter. Samaria, indeed, had already received the new religion to a great extent; an innovation upon Jewish prejudice, remarkable both in itself and its results. The most important circum-

Paul and  
Barnabas.

Differences between Jew and Gentile partially abrogated by Peter



stance in that transaction, the collision with Simon the magician, will be considered in a future chapter, that which describes the conflict of Christianity with Orientalism. The vision of Peter, which seemed by the Divine sanction to annul the distinction of meats, of itself threw down one of those barriers which separated the Jews from the rest of mankind (1). This sacred usage prohibited not merely all social intercourse, but all close or domestic communication with other races. But the figurative instruction which the Apostle inferred from this abrogation of all distinction between clean and unclean animals, was of still greater importance. The proselytes of the gate, that is, those heathens who, without submitting to circumcision, or acknowledging the claims of the whole law to their obedience, had embraced the main principles of Judaism, more particularly the unity of God, were at once admitted into the Christian community. Cornelius was, as it were, the representative of his class; his admission by the federal rite of baptism into the Christian community, the public sanction of the Almighty to this step by "the pouring out the gift of the Holy Ghost" upon the Gentiles, decided this part of the question (2). Still the admission into Christianity was *through Judaism*. It required all the influence of the Apostle, and his distinct asseveration that he acted by divine commission, to induce the Christians of Jerusalem to admit Gentiles imperfectly Judaized, and uninitiated by the national rite of circumcision into the race of Israel, to a participation in the kingdom of the Messiah.

To this subject we must however revert, when we attempt more fully to develop the internal conflict of Christianity with Judaism.

(1) Acts x. xi. to 21.

(2) It is disputed, whether Cornelius was, in fact, a proselyte of the Gate. (See, on one side, Lord Barrington's Works, vol. i. p. 128., and Benson's History of Christianity; on the other, Kuiniel, *in loco*.) He is called *εὐσεβὴς* and *φοβοῦμενος τὸν Θεόν*, the usual appellation of proselytes; he bestowed alms on the Jewish people; he observed the Jewish hours of prayer; he was evidently familiar with the Jewish belief in angels, and not unversed in the Jewish Scriptures. Yet, on the other hand, the objections are not without weight. The whole difficulty appears to arise from not considering how vaguely the term of "Proselyte of the Gate" must, from the nature of things, have been applied, and the different feelings entertained towards such converts by the different classes of the Jews. While the proselytes, properly so called,—those who were identified with the Jews by circumcision,—were a distinct and definite class; the Proselytes of the Gate must have comprehended all who made the least advances towards Judaism, from those who regularly attended on the services of the synagogue, and conformed in all respects, except circumcision, with the ceremonial law, down, through the countless shades of opinion, to those who merely admitted the first principle of Judaism,—the Unity of God; were occasional attendants in the synagogue; and had only, as it were, ascended the first steps on the threshold of conversion. The more rigid Jews

looked with jealousy, even on the circumcised Proselytes; the terms of admission were made as difficult and repulsive as possible; on the imperfect, they looked with still greater suspicion, and were rather jealous of communicating their exclusive privileges, than eager to extend the influence of their opinions. But the more liberal must have acted on different principles; they must have encouraged the advances of incipient proselytes; the synagogues were open throughout the Roman Empire, and many who, like Horace, "went to scoff," may "have remained to pray." As, then, the Christian Apostles always commenced their labours in the synagogue of their countrymen, among all who might assemble there from regular habit, or accidental curiosity, they would address Heathen minds in every gradation of Jewish belief, from the proselyte who only wanted circumcision, to the Gentile who had only just begun to discover the superior reasonableness of the Jewish Theism. Hence the step from the conversion of imperfect proselytes to that of real Gentiles, must have been imperceptible, or rather, even with the Gentile convert, that which was the first principle of Judaism, the belief in one God, was an indispensable preliminary to his admission of Christianity. The one great decisive change was from the decree of the Apostolic council (Acts xiv.), obviously intended for real, though imperfect proselytes, to the total abrogation of Judaism by the doctrines of St. Paul.

The conversion of Cornelius took place before the persecution of Herod Agrippa, down to which period our history has traced the external conflict maintained by Christianity against the dominant Judaism. On the death of Herod, his son Agrippa being a minor and educated at Rome, a Roman prefect resumed the provincial government of Judæa. He ruled almost always with a stern, sometimes with an iron hand, and the gradually increasing turbulence of the province led to severity; severity with a profligate and tyrannical ruler degenerated into oppression; until the systematic cruelty of Florus maddened the nation into the last fatal insurrection. The Sanhedrin appear at no time to have possessed sufficient influence with the prefect to be permitted to take violent measures against the Christians. With Cuspius Fadus, who had transferred the custody of the high priest's robes into the Antonia, they were on no amicable terms. Tiberius Alexander, an apostate from Judaism, was little likely to lend himself to any acts of bigotry or persecution. During the prefecture of Cumanus, the massacre in the Temple, the sanguinary feuds between the Jews and Samaritans, occupied the public mind; it was a period of political disorder and confusion, which continued for a considerable time.

The commencement of the administration of the whole province by the corrupt and dissolute Felix, the insurrection of Theudas, the reappearance of the sons of the Galilean Judas, the incursions of the predatory bands which rose in all quarters, would divert the attention of the ruler from a peaceful sect, who, to his apprehension, differed from their countrymen only in some harmless speculative opinions, and in their orderly and quiet conduct. If the Christians were thus secure in their peacefulness and obscurity from the hostility of the Roman rulers, the native Jewish authorities, gradually more and more in collision with their foreign masters, would not possess the power of conducting persecution to any extent. Instead of influencing the counsels of the prefect, the high priest was either a mere instrument, appointed by his caprice, or if he aspired to independent authority, in direct opposition to his tyrannous master. The native authorities were, in fact, continually in collision with the foreign ruler; one, Ananias, had been sent in chains to Rome as accessory to the tumults which had arisen between the Jews and the Samaritans; his successor, Jonathan, fell by the hand of an assassin, in the employ, or at least with the connivance, of the Roman governor. On his acquittal at Rome, Ananias returned at Jerusalem and reassumed the vacant pontificate; and it was during this period that Christianity, in the person of Paul, came again into conflict with the constituted authorities, as well as with the popular hostility. The prompt and decisive interference of the Roman guard; the protection and even the favour shown to Paul, directly it was discovered that he was not identified with any

State of Ju-  
dæa.

Procurator  
Judæa,  
A. D. 44.  
A. D. 46.

A. D. 48.

A. D. 50.

High  
Priest, A.  
D. 46. to  
49.

of the insurgent robbers; the adjournment of the cause to the tribunal of Felix at Cæsarea;—show how little weight or power was permitted either to the high priest or the Sanhedrin, and the slight respect paid to the religious feelings of the people.

The details of this remarkable transaction will command our notice, in the order of time, when we have traced the proceedings of Paul and his fellow missionaries among the Jews beyond the borders of Palestine, and exhibited the conflict which they maintained with Judaism in foreign countries. The new opening, as it were, for the extension of Christianity, after the conversion of Cornelius, directed the attention of Barnabas to Saul, who, since his flight from Jerusalem, had remained in secure retirement at Tarsus. From thence he was summoned by Barnabas to Antioch (1). Antioch, where the body of believers assumed the name of Christians, became, as it were, the head-quarters of the foreign operations of Christianity (2). After the mission of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem during the famine (either about the time or soon after the Herodian persecution), these two distinguished teachers of the Gospel were invested, with the divine sanction, in the apostolic office (3). But these foreign operations were at first altogether confined to the Jewish population, which was scattered throughout the whole of Syria and Asia Minor. On their arrival in a town, which they had not visited before, they of course sought a hospitable reception among their countrymen; the first scene of their labours was the synagogue (4). In the Island of Cyprus, the native country of Barnabas, a considerable part of the population must have been of Jewish descent (5). Both at Salamis at the eastern, and at Paphos on the western, extremity, and, probably, in other places during their journey through the whole length of the island, they found flourishing communities of their countrymen. To the governor, a man of inquiring and philosophic mind (6), the simple principles of Judaism could not be unknown; and perhaps, the contrast between the chaste, and simple, and rational worship of the synagogue, and the proverbially sensual rites of Heathenism, for which Paphos was renowned, may have heightened his respect for, or increased his inclination to, the purer faith. The arrival of two new teachers among the Jews of the city, could not but reach the ears of Sergius Paulus; the sensation they excited among their countrymen awoke his curiosity. He had already encouraged the familiar attendance of a Jewish wonder-worker, a man who probably mis-

Paul and  
Barnabas  
Apostles.

Cyprus.

Sergius  
Paulus.

(1) Acts xi. 25.

(2) Acts, xi. 26.

(3) Acts, xiii. 2.

(4) Acts, xiii. 4—12.

(5) History of the Jews, iii. 12. In the fatal insurrection during the reign of Hadrian, they are said to have massacred 240,000 of the Grecian inhabitants, and obtained temporary possession of the island.

(6) The remarkable accuracy of St. Luke in naming the governor, proconsul, has been frequently observed. The provincial governors appointed by the Emperors were called *propratores*, those by the Senate, *proconsuls*. That of Cyprus was properly in the nomination of the Emperor. but Augustus transferred his right, as to Cyprus and Narbonese Gaul, to the Senate. Dion Cassius, 1. liv. p. 523.



used some skill in natural science for purposes of fraud and gain. Bar-Jesus (the son of Jesus or Joshua) was probably less actuated, in his opposition to the apostles, by Jewish bigotry, than by the apprehension of losing his influence with the governor. He saw, no doubt, in the apostles, adventurers like himself. The miraculous blindness with which the magician was struck, convinced the governor of the superior claims of the apostles; the beauty of the Christian doctrines filled him with astonishment; and the Roman proconsul, though not united by baptism to the Christian community, must, nevertheless, have added great weight, by his acknowledged support, to the cause of Christianity in Cyprus (1).

From Cyprus they crossed to the southern shore of Asia Minor, landed at Perga in Pamphylia, and passed through the chief cities of that region. In the more flourishing towns they found a considerable Jewish population, and the synagogue of the Jews appears to have been attended by great numbers of Gentiles, more or less disposed to embrace the tenets of Judaism. Every where the more rigid Jews met them with fierce and resentful opposition; but among the less bigoted of their countrymen, and this more unprejudiced class of proselytes, they made great progress. At the first considerable city in which they appeared, Antioch in Pisidia, the opposition of the Jews seems to have been so general, and the favourable disposition of their Gentile hearers so decided, that the apostles avowedly disclaimed all farther connection with the more violent party, and united themselves to the Gentile believers. Either from the number or the influence of the Jews in Antioch, the public interest in that dispute, instead of being confined within the synagogue, prevailed through the whole city; but the Jews had so much weight, especially with some of the women of rank, that they at length obtained the expulsion of the apostles from the city by the ruling authorities. At Iconium, to which city they retired, the opposition was still more violent; the populace was excited; and here many of the Gentiles uniting with the Jews against them, they were constrained to fly for their lives into the barbarous district of Lycaonia. Lystra and Derbe appear to have been almost entirely Heathen towns. The remarkable collision of the apostles with Paganism in the former of these places, will hereafter be considered. To Lystra, the hostility of the Jews pursued them, where, by some strange revulsion of popular feeling, Paul, a short time before worshipped as a God, was cast out of the city, half-dead. They proceeded to Derbe, and thence returned through the same cities to Antioch in Syria. The ordination of "elders (2)," to preside over the Christian communities, implies their secession from the synagogues of their

Jews in  
the cities  
of Asia Mi-  
nor.

(1) Had he thus become altogether Christian, his baptism would assuredly have been mentioned by the sacred writer.

(2) Acts, xiv. 23.

countrymen. In Jerusalem, from the multitude of synagogues, which belonged to the different races of foreign Jews, another might arise, or one of those usually occupied by the Galileans might pass into the separate possession of the Christians, without exciting much notice, particularly as great part of the public devotions of all classes were performed in the Temple, where the Christians were still regular attendants. Most likely the first distinct community which met in a chamber or place of assemblage of their own, the first Church, was formed at Antioch. To the Heathen this would appear nothing more than the establishment of a new Jewish synagogue; an event, whenever their numbers were considerable, of common occurrence. To the Jew alone it assumed the appearance of a dangerous and formidable apostasy from the religion of his ancestors.

Jewish attachment  
to the law  
A. D. 49.

The barrier was now thrown down, but Judaism rallied, as it were, for a last effort behind its ruins. It was now manifest that Christianity would no longer endure the rigid nationalism of the Jew, who demanded that every proselyte to his faith should be enrolled as a member of his race. Circumcision could no longer be maintained as the seal of conversion (1), but still the total abrogation of the Mosaic law, the extinction of all their privileges of descent, the substitution of a purely religious for a national community, to the Christianised Jew appeared, as it were, a kind of treason against the religious majesty of their ancestors: a conference became necessary between the leaders of the Christian community to avert an inevitable collision, which might be fatal to the progress of the religion. Already the peace of the flourishing community at Antioch (2), had been disturbed by some of the more zealous converts from Jerusalem, who still asserted the indispensable necessity of circumcision. Paul and Barnabas proceeded as delegates from the community at Antioch; and what is called (3) the council of Jerusalem, a full assembly of all the apostles then present in the Metropolis, solemnly debated this great question. How far the earlier apostles were themselves emancipated from the inveterate Judaism does not distinctly appear, but the situation of affairs required the most nicely-balanced judgment, united with the utmost moderation of temper. On one side a Pharisaic party had brought into Christianity a rigorous and passionate attachment to the Mosaic institutes, in their strictest and most minute provisions. On the

Council of  
Jerusalem,  
A. D. 49.

(1) The adherence, even of those Jews who might here be expected to be less bigoted to their institutions, to this distinctive rite of their religion, is illustrated by many curious particulars in the history. Two foreign princes, Aziz king of Emesa, and Polemo king of Cilicia, submitted to circumcision, an indispensable stipulation, in order to obtain in marriage, the former Drusilla, the latter Bernice, princesses of the Herodian family. On one occasion the alliance of

some foreign troops was rejected, unless they would first qualify themselves in this manner for the distinction of associating with the Jews.

(2) Acts, xv. 1.

(3) It is uncertain whether James who presided in this assembly was either of the two James's included among the twelve apostles, or a distinct person, a relative of Jesus. The latter opinion rests on the authority of Eusebius.

other hand, beyond the borders of Palestine, far the greater number of converts had been formed from that intermediate class which stood between Heathenism and Judaism. There might seem, then, no alternative but to estrange one party by the abrogation of the law, or the other by the strict enforcement of all its provisions. Each party might appeal to the Divine sanction. To the eternal, the irrevocable sanctity of the law, the God of their Fathers, according to the Jewish opinion, was solemnly pledged; while the vision of Peter, which authorised the admission of the Gentiles into Christianity—still more the success of Paul and Barnabas, in proselyting the Heathen, accompanied by undeniable manifestations of Divine favour, seemed irresistible evidence of the Divine sanction to the abrogation of the law, as far as concerned the Gentile Proselytes. The influence of James effected a discreet and temperate compromise: Judaism as it were capitulated on honourable terms. The Christians were to be left to that freedom, enjoyed by the Proselytes of the Gate, but they were enjoined to pay so much respect to those with whom they were associated in religious worship, as to abstain from those practices, which were most offensive to their habits (1). The partaking of the sacrificial feasts in the idolatrous Temples was so plainly repugnant to the first principles, either of the Jewish or the Christian Theism, as to be altogether irreconcilable with the professed opinions of a proselyte to either. The using things strangled, and blood, for food appears to have been the most revolting to Jewish feeling; and perhaps among the dietetic regulations of the Mosaic law, none, in a southern climate, was more conducive to health. The last article in this celebrated decree was a moral prohibition, but, not improbably, directed more particularly against the dissolute rites of those Syrian and Asiatic religions, in which prostitution formed an essential part, and which prevailed to a great extent in the countries bordering upon Palestine (2).

The second journey (3) of Paul brought him more immediately into contact with Paganism. Though, no doubt, in every city there were resident Jews, with whom he took up his abode, and his first public appearance was in the synagogue of his countrymen, yet he is now more frequently extending, as it were, his aggressive operations into the dominions of Heathenism. If he found hospitality, no

Second  
journey of  
Paul.  
A. D. 50.

(1) The reason assigned for these regulations appears to infer that as yet the Christians, in general, met in the same places of religious assemblage with the Jews, at least this view gives a clear and simple sense to a much contested passage. These provisions were necessary because the Mosaic law was universally read and from immemorial usage in the synagogues. The direct violation of its most vital principles by any of those who joined in the common worship would be incongruous, and of course highly offensive to the more zealous Mosaists.

(2) It should be remembered that as yet Christianity had only spread into countries, where this religious *πορνεῖα*, chiefly prevailed, into Syria and Cyprus. Of the first we may form a fair notion, from Lucian's Treatise de Deâ Syriâ, and the Daphne of Antioch had no doubt already obtained its voluptuous celebrity; the latter, particularly Paphos, can require no illustration. Bentley's ingenious reading of *χοιρῖα*, swine's flesh, wants the indispensable authority of manuscripts.

(3) Acts, xvi. 1. to xviii. 22.



doubt he encountered either violent or secret hostility from his brethren. Few circumstances however occur which belong more especially to the conflict between Judaism and Christianity.

Paul and Barnabas set out together on this more extensive journey, but on some dispute as to the companions who were to attend upon them, Barnabas turned aside with Mark to his native country of Cyprus; while Paul, accompanied by Silas, revisited those cities in Syria and Cilicia, where they had already established Christian communities.

At Lystra, Paul showed his deference to Jewish opinion by permitting a useful disciple, named Timothy, to be circumcised (1). But this case was peculiar, as Timothy, by his mother's side, was a Jew; and, though by a connection with a man of Greek race, she had forfeited both for herself and her offspring the privileges of Jewish descent, the circumcision of the son might, in a great degree, remove the stigma which attached to his birth, and which would render him less acceptable among his Jewish brethren. Having left this region, he ranged northward, through Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia; but, instead of continuing his course towards the shore of the Black Sea to Bithynia, admonished by a vision, he passed to Europe, and at Neapolis, in Macedonia (2), landed the obscure and unregarded individual, to whom Europe, in Christianity, owes the great principle of her civilisation, the predominant element in her superiority over the more barbarous and unenlightened quarters of the world. At Philippi, the Jews being few in number, appear only to have had a *Proseucha*, a smaller place of public worship, as usual, near the sea-side; at Thessalonica they were more numerous, and had a synagogue (3); at Berea, they appear likewise to have formed a flourishing community; even at Athens the Jews had made many proselytes. Corinth, a new colony of settlers from all quarters, a central mercantile mart, through which passed a great part of the commerce between the East and West, offered a still more eligible residence for the Jews, who, no doubt, had already become traders to a considerable extent (4). Their numbers had been lately increased by their expulsion from Rome, under the Emperor Claudius (5). This edict is attributed by

(1) Acts, xvi. 3.

(2) Acts, xvi. 11, 12.

(3) Acts, xvii. 1. Thessalonica is a city where the Jews have perhaps resided for a longer period, in considerable numbers, than in any other, at least in Europe. When the Jews fled from Christian persecution to the milder oppression of the Turks, vast numbers settled at Thessalonica, Hist. Jews, iii. Von Hammer states the present population of Thessalonica (Salonichi) at 16,000 Greeks; 12,000 Jews; and 50,000 Turks. *Osmánische Geschichte*, i. 442.

(4) Corinth, since its demolition by Mummius, had lain in ruins till the time of Julius Cæsar, who established a colony on its site. From the advantages of its situation, the connecting link,

as it were, between Italy, the north of Greece, and Asia, it grew up rapidly to all its former wealth and splendour.

(5) The manner in which this event is related by the Epigrammatic Biographer, even the mistakes in his account are remarkably characteristic. *Judeos, Chresto duce, assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit*. The confusion between the religion and its founder, and the substitution of the word *Chrestos*, a good man, which would bear an intelligible sense to a heathen for *Christos* (the anointed), which would only convey any distinct notion to a Jew, illustrate the state of things. *Cum perperam Christianus pronuntiatur a vobis (nam nec nominis est certa notitia penes vos) de suavitate vel benignitate compositum est*.

Suetonius to the tumults excited by the mutual hostility between the Jews and Christians. Christianity, therefore, must thus early have made considerable progress in Rome. The scenes of riot were, probably, either like those which took place in the Asiatic cities, where the Jews attempted to use violence against the Christians; or, as in Corinth itself, where the tribunal of the magistrate was disturbed by fierce, and to him unintelligible disputes, as he supposed, between two Jewish factions. With two of the exiles, Aquila and Priscilla, Paul, as practising the same trade, that of tent-makers (1), made a more intimate connection, residing with them, and pursuing their craft in common (2). At Corinth, possibly for the first time, the Christians openly seceded from the Jews, and obtained a separate school of public instruction; even the chief ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, became a convert. But the consequence of this secession was the more declared and open animosity of the Jewish party, which ended in an appeal to the public tribunal of the governor. The result of the trial before the judgment-seat of Gallio, the pro-consul of Achaia, appears to have been an ebullition of popular indignation in favour of the Christians, as another of the chief rulers of the synagogue, probably the prosecutor of the Christians, underwent the punishment of scourging before the tribunal.

From Corinth (3) Paul returned by sea to Cæsarea (4), and from thence to Antioch.

The third journey of St. Paul (5) belongs still more exclusively to the conflict of Christianity with Paganism. At Ephesus (6) alone, where he arrived after a circuit through Phrygia and Galatia, he encountered some wandering wonder-working sons of a certain Sceva, a Jew, who attempted to imitate the miraculous cures which he wrought. The failure of the exorcism, which they endeavoured to perform by the name of Jesus, and which only increased the violence of the lunatic, made a deep impression on the whole Jewish population. His circuit through Macedonia, Greece, back to Phi-

Third  
journey of  
Paul.

Tert. Apolog. c. 3. Sed exponenda hujus nominis ratio est propter ignorantium errorem, qui eum immutata literâ Chrestum solent dicere. Laet. Inst. 4. 7. 5.

(1) The Jews thought it right that every one, even the learned, should know some art or trade. Sapientes plurimi artem aliquam fecerunt ne aliorum beneficentia indigerent. Maimonides. See Lightfoot, iii. 227.

(2) There was a coarse stuff called Cilicium, made of goats' hair, manufactured in the native country of Paul, and used for the purpose of portable tents, which it is ingeniously conjectured may have been the art practised by Paul.

(3) From Corinth after he had been rejoined by Silvas (Silvanus) and Timotheus, was most probably written the first epistle to the Thessalonians. This epistle is full of allusions to his recent journey. On his arrival at Athens he had sent back Timotheus to ascertain the state of the infant church. Subsequently it appears that the

more Jewish opinion of the immediate reappearance of the Messiah to judgment, had gained great ground in the community. It is slightly alluded to in the first epistle, v. 2, 3. The second seems to have been written expressly to counteract this notion.

(4) We make no observation on the vow made at Cenchrea, as we follow the natural construction of the words. The Vulgate, St. Chrysostom, and many more commentators, attribute the vow, whatever it was, to Aquila, not to Paul.

There is great doubt as to the authenticity of the clause, verse 24. ("I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem.") Those who suppose it to be genuine, explain the *ἀναγκαῖον* in the next verse, as going up to Jerusalem; but on the whole I am inclined to doubt any such visit.

(5) Acts, xviii. 23. xxi. 6.

(6) Acts, xviii. 24.

lippi, down the *Ægean* to Miletus, by Cos, Rhodes, Patara to Tyre, and thence to Cæsarea, brought him again near to Jerusalem, where he had determined to appear at the feast of Pentecost. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends, and the prophetic denunciation of his imprisonment by a certain Agabus, he adhered to his resolution of confronting the whole hostile nation at their great concourse. For not only would the Jews, but perhaps the Jewish Christians likewise, in the head-quarters of Judaism, confederate against this renegade, who not only asserted Jesus to be the Messiah, but had avowedly raised the uncircumcised Gentiles to the level of, if not to a superiority over, the descendant of Israel. Yet, of the real nature of St. Paul's Christianity, they were still singularly, yet characteristically ignorant; they could not yet persuade themselves that Christianity aspired to a total independence of Judaism; their Temple was still, as it were, the vestibule to the Divine favour; and, having no notion that the Gentile converts to Christianity would be altogether indifferent as to the local sanctity of any edifice, they appear to have apprehended an invasion, or, at least, a secret attempt to introduce the uncircumcised to the privilege of worship within the hallowed precincts. The motive of Paul in visiting Jerusalem was probably to allay the jealousy of his countrymen; the period selected for his visit was, as it were, the birthday of the Law (1); the solemnity which commemorated the divine enactment of that code, which every Jew considered of eternal and irreversible authority. Nor did he lay aside his customary prudence. He complied with the advice of his friends, and instead of appearing in the Temple as an ordinary worshipper, that he might show his own personal reverence for the usages of his ancestors, he united himself to four persons who had taken upon them a vow, a deliberate acknowledgement not merely of respect for, but of zeal beyond, the law (2). His person, however, was too well known to the Asiatic Jews not to be recognised; a sudden outcry was raised against him—he was charged with having violated the sanctity of the holy precincts by introducing uncircumcised strangers, Trophimus an Ephesian, with whom he had been familiarly conversing in the city, within those pillars, or palisades, which, in the three predominant languages of the time, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, forbade the advance of any who were not of pure Jewish descent. He was dragged out, no doubt, into the Court of the Gentiles, the doors closed, and but for the prompt interference of the Roman guard, which was always mounted, particularly during the days of festival, he would have fallen a victim to the popular fury. For while the unconverted Jews would pursue his life with implacable indignation, he could, at best, expect no as-

Paul in Jerusalem.

A. D. 58.

Paul in the Temple.

(1) The ceasing to attend at the Passover, after, in his own language, "the great Passover had been sacrificed," is a circumstance by no means unworthy of notice.

(2) Acts, xxi. 17—26.



sistance from the Jewish Christians. The interposition of the Roman commander in Jerusalem was called forth, rather to suppress a dangerous riot, than to rescue an innocent victim from the tumultuous violence of the populace. Lysias at first supposed Paul to be one of the insurgent chieftains who had disturbed the public peace during the whole administration of Felix. His fears identified him with a Jew of Egyptian birth, who, a short time before, had appeared on the Mount of Olives at the head of above 30,000 fanatic followers; and, though his partizans were scattered by the decisive measures of Felix, had contrived to make his escape (1). The impression that his insurrection had made on the minds of the Romans, is shown by the terror of his reappearance, which seems to have haunted the mind of Lysias. The ease and purity with which Paul addressed him in Greek, as these insurgents probably communicated with their followers only in the dialect of the country; the commanding serenity of his demeanour; and the declaration that he was a citizen of an Asiatic town, not a native of Palestine, so far influenced Lysias in his favour, as to permit him to address the multitude. It was probably from the flight of steps which led from the outer court of the Temple up into the Antonia that Paul commenced his harangue. He spoke in the vernacular language of the country, and was heard in silence, as far as his account of his conversion to the new religion; but directly that he touched on the dangerous subject of the admission of the Gentiles to the privileges of Christianity, the popular frenzy broke out again with such violence, as scarcely to be controlled by the Roman military. Paul was led away into the court of the fortress, and the commander, who probably understood nothing of his address, but only saw, that instead of allaying, it increased the turbulence of the people (for with the characteristic violence of an Asiatic mob, they are described as casting off their clothes, and throwing dust into the air), gave orders that he should suffer the usual punishment of scourging with rods, in order that he might be forced to confess the real origin of the disturbance. But this proceeding was arrested by Paul's claiming the privilege of a Roman citizen, whom it was treason against the majesty of the Roman people to expose to such indignity (2). The soldiers, or lictors, engaged in scourging him recoiled in terror. The respect of Lysias himself for his prisoner rose to more than its former height, for having himself purchased this valuable privilege at a high price, one who had inherited the same right appeared an important personage in his estimation.

The next morning the Sanhedrin was convened, and Paul was again brought into the Temple, to the Gazith, the chamber where the Sanhedrin held its judicial meetings. Ananias presided in the

(1) Hist. of Jews, ii. 207.

(2) Acts, xxii. 24. 29.

Paul before the Sanhedrin.

assembly as High Priest, an office which he possessed rather by usurpation than legitimate authority. After the tumults between the Samaritans and the Jews, during the administration of Cumanus, Ananias had, as was before briefly stated, been sent as a prisoner to Rome, to answer for the charges against his nation (1). After two years he had been released by the interest of Agrippa, and allowed to return to Jerusalem. In the meantime the High Priesthood had been filled by Jonathan, who was murdered by assassins in the Temple, employed, or at least connived at, by the governor (2). Ananias appears to have resumed the vacant authority, until the appointment of Ismael, son of Fabi, by Agrippa (3). Ananias was of the Sadducaic party, a man harsh, venal, and ambitious. Faction most probably ran very high in the national council; we are inclined to suppose, from the favourable expressions of Josephus, that the murdered Jonathan was of the Pharisaic sect; and his recent death, and the usurpation of the office by Ananias, would incline the Pharisaic faction to resist all measures proposed by their adversaries. Of this state of things Paul seems to have been fully aware. He commenced with a solemn protestation of his innocence, which so excited the indignation of Ananias, that he commanded him to be struck over the mouth, a common punishment in the East for language which may displease those in power (4). The answer of St. Paul to this arbitrary violation of the law, for by the Jewish course of justice no punishment could be inflicted without a formal sentence, was in a tone of vehement indignation,—“God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?” Rebuked for thus disrespectfully answering the High Priest, Paul answered that he did not know that there was any one at that time lawfully exercising the office of High Priest (5), an office which he was bound, by the strict letter of the sacred writings, to treat with profound respect. He proceeded, without scruple, to avail himself of the dissensions of the Court; for by resting his defence on his belief in the resurrection, he irritated more violently the Sadducaic party, but threw that of the Pharisees on his own side. The angry discussion was terminated by the interposition of the Roman commander, who again withdrew Paul into the citadel. Yet his life was not secure even there. The crime of assassination had become fearfully frequent in Jerusalem. Neither the sanctity of the Temple protected the unsuspecting worshipper from the secret dagger, nor, as we have seen, did the majesty of the High Priest’s office secure the first religious and civil magistrate of the nation from the same ignoble fate. A conspiracy was formed by some of these fanatic

(1) Joseph. Ant. xx. 6. 2.

(2) Joseph. xx. 8. 5.

(3) A. D. 56. Joseph. Ant. xx. 8. 8.

(4) Acts, xxiii. 2, 3.

(5) “I wist not that there was a High Priest,” such appears to be the translation of this passage, suggested by Mr. Greswell, most agreeable to the sense.

zealots against the life of Paul; but the plot being discovered by one of his relatives, a sister's son, he was sent under a strong guard to Cæsarea, the residence of the Roman provincial governor, the dis-solute and tyrannical Felix.

The Sanhedrin pursued their hated adversary to the tribunal of the Governor, but with Felix they possessed no commanding influence. A hired orator, whom from his name we may conjecture to have been a Roman, employed perhaps according to the usage, which provided that all legal proceedings should be conducted in the Latin language, appeared as their advocate before the tribunal (1). But the defence of Paul against the charge of sedition, of innovation, and the profanation of the Temple, was equally successful with Felix, who was well acquainted with the Jewish character, and by no means disposed to lend himself to their passions and animosities. The charge therefore was dismissed. Paul, though not set at liberty, was allowed free intercourse with his Christian brethren; Felix himself even condescended to hear, and heard not without emotion, the high moral doctrines of St. Paul, which were so much at variance with his unjust and adulterous life. But it was not so much the virtue as the rapacity of Felix which thus inclined him to look with favour upon the Apostle: knowing probably the profuse liberality of the Christians, and their zealous attachment to their teacher, he expected that the liberty of Paul would be purchased at any price he might demand. For the two last years therefore of the administration of Felix, Paul remained a prisoner; and Felix, at his departure, well aware that accusations were lodged against him by the representatives of the Jewish nation, endeavoured to propitiate their favour by leaving him still in custody (2). Nor had the Jews lost sight of this great object of animosity. Before the new governor, Porcius Festus, a man of rigid justice, and less acquainted with the Jewish character, their charges were renewed with the utmost acrimony. On his first visit to Jerusalem, the High Priest demanded that Paul should be sent back for trial before the Sanhedrin; and though Festus refused the petition till he should himself have investigated the case at Cæsarea, on his return he proposed that Paul should undergo a public examination at Jerusalem in his own presence. The design of the Jews was to

Paul sent  
to Cæsa-  
rea.

Paul be-  
fore Felix.

Paul in  
prison at  
Cæsarea.

A. D. 38.

(1) Acts, xxiv. 1—26.

(2) There is great chronological difficulty in arranging this part of the administration of Felix. But the difficulty arises, not so much in harmonising the narrative of the Acts with the historians of the period, as in reconciling Josephus with Tacitus. Taking the account of Josephus, it is impossible to compress all the events of that part of the administration of Felix, which he places after the accession of Nero, into a single year. Yet he states that, on the recall of Felix, he only escaped punishment for his crimes through the interest of his brother, Pallas. Yet, according to Tacitus, the influence of Pallas

with Nero ceased in the second year of his reign, and he was deposed from all his offices. In the third he was indicted of lèse majesté, and his acquittal was far from acceptable to the Emperor. In the fourth year his protectress Agrippina was discarded for Poppæa; in the next she was put to death. In the ninth of Nero's reign Pallas himself, though charged with no new crime, was poisoned. The question therefore is, whether, in any intermediate period, he could have regained, by any intrigue, sufficient influence to shield his brother from the prosecution of the Jews.



surprise and assassinate the prisoner, and Paul, probably informed of their secret intentions, persisted in his appeal to Cæsar. To this appeal from a Roman citizen, the governor could not refuse his assent. The younger Agrippa had now returned from Rome, where he had resided during his minority. He had succeeded to part only of his father's dominions; he was in possession of the Asmonean palace at Jerusalem, and had the right of appointing the High Priest, which he exercised apparently with all the capricious despotism of a Roman governor. He appeared in great pomp at Cæsarea, with his sister Bernice, on a visit to Festus. The Roman governor appears to have consulted him, as a man of moderation and knowledge of the Jewish law, upon the case of Paul. The Apostle was summoned before him. The defence of Paul made a strong impression upon Agrippa, who, though not a convert, was probably from that time favourably disposed to Christianity. The appeal of Paul to the Emperor was irrevocable by an inferior authority; whether he would have preferred remaining in Judæa, after an acquittal from Festus, and perhaps under the protection of Agrippa, or whether to his own mind Rome offered a more noble and promising field for his Christian zeal, Paul, setting forth on his voyage, left probably for ever the land of his forefathers—that land beyond all others inhospitable to the religion of Christ—that land which Paul, perhaps almost alone of Jewish descent, had ceased to consider the one narrow portion of the habitable world, which the love of the Universal Father had sanctified as the chosen dwelling of his people, as the future seat of dominion, glory, and bliss.

The great object of Jewish animosity had escaped the hostility of the Sanhedrin; but an opportunity soon occurred of wreaking their baffled vengeance on another victim, far less obnoxious to the general feelings even of the more bigoted among the Jews. The head of the Christian community in Jerusalem was James, whom Josephus himself, if the expression in that remarkable passage be genuine (which is difficult to believe), dignifies with the appellation of the brother of Jesus. On the death of Festus, and before the arrival of his successor Albinus, the High Priesthood was in the hands of Annas, or Ananus, the last of five sons of the former Annas, who had held that rank. Annas was the head of the Sadducaic party, and seized the opportunity of this suspension of the Roman authority, to reassert the power of the Sanhedrin over life and death. Many persons, whom it is impossible not to suppose Christians, were executed by the legal punishment of stoning. Among these, the head of the community was the most exposed to the animosity of the government, and therefore least likely to escape in their day of temporary power. The fact of the murder of St. James, at least of certain supposed offenders against the law, whom it is

Paul be-  
fore  
Agrippa.

Paul sent  
to Rome.

A. D. 62

Martyr-  
dom of  
James.

difficult not to identify with the Christians (1), rests on the authority of the Jewish historian (2) : in the details which are related on the still more questionable testimony of Hegesippus (3), we feel that we are passing from the clear and pellucid air of the apostolic history, into the misty atmosphere of legend. We would willingly attempt to disentangle the more probable circumstances of this impressive story from the embellishments of later invention ; but it happens that its more striking and picturesque incidents, are precisely the least credible. After withdrawing every particular inconsistent either with the character or usages of the time, little remains but the simple facts that James was so highly esteemed in Jerusalem, as to have received the appellation of the Just (a title, it should seem, clearly of Jewish origin) ; that he perished during this short period of the sanguinary administration of Ananus, possibly was thrown down in a tumult from the precipitous walls of the Temple, where a more merciful persecutor put an end to his sufferings with a fuller's club ; finally, that these cruel proceedings of Ananus were contemplated with abhorrence by the more moderate, probably by the whole Pharisaic party ; his degradation from the supreme office was demanded, and hailed with satisfaction by the predominant sentiment of the people.

But the days of Jewish persecution were drawing to a close. Even religious animosity was subdued in the collision of still fiercer passions. A darker and more absorbing interest, the fate of the nation in the imminent, the inevitable conflict with the arms of

Jewish  
war.

(1) Connecting this narrative of Josephus, even without admitting the authenticity of the passage about St. James, with the proceedings against St. Paul as related in the Acts, it appears to me highly improbable that, if Ananus put any persons to death for crimes against religion, they should have been any other than Christians. Who but Christians would be obnoxious to capital punishment ? and against whom, but them, would a legal conviction be obtained ? Certainly not against the Pharisees, who went beyond the law, or the zealots and followers of Judas the Galilean, whose fate would have excited little commiseration or regret among the moderate and peaceful part of the community. Lardner therefore appears to me in error, in admitting the prosecutions of Ananus, but disconnecting them from the Christian history.

(2) Joseph. Ant. xx. 8. 1. Lardner's Jewish Testimonies, vol. iii. p. 342. 4to. edit.

(3) This narrative of Hegesippus has undergone the searching criticism of Scaliger in Chron. Euseb. and Le Clerc, Hist. Eccles. and Ars Critica ; it has been feebly defended by Petavius, and zealously by Tillemont, Heinichen, the recent editor of Eusebius, seems desirous to trace some vestiges of truth. In these early forgeries it is not only interesting and important to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the traditions themselves, but the design and the authors of such pious frauds. This legend seems imagined in a spirit of Christian asceticism, endeavouring to conform itself to Jewish usage, of which, nevertheless it betrays remarkable ignorance. It

attributes to the Christian bishop the Nazaritish abstinence from the time of his birth, not only from wine, but, in the spirit of Buddhism, from every thing which had life ; the self-denial of the luxury of anointing with oil, with a monkish abhorrence of ablutions—a practice positively commanded in the law, and from which no Jew abstained. It gives him the power of entering the Holy Place at all times,—a practice utterly in opposition to the vital principles of Judaism, as he could not have been of the race of Aaron. It describes his kneeling till his knees were as hard as those of a camel—another indication of the growing spirit of monkery. We may add the injudicious introduction of the “ Scribes and Pharisees,” in the language of the gospel, as the authors of his fate ; which, according to the more probable account of Josephus, and the change in the state of feeling in Jerusalem, was solely to be attributed to the Sadducees. The final improbability is the leading to the pinnacle of the Temple (a circumstance obviously borrowed from our Lord's temptation), a man who had been for years the acknowledged head of the Christian community in Jerusalem, that he might publicly dissuade the people from believing in Christ ; still further his burial after such a death within the walls of the city, and close to the Temple : all these incongruities indicate a period at which Christianity had begun to degenerate into asceticism, and had been so long estranged from Judaism as to be ignorant of its real character and usages.

Rome, occupied the Jewish mind in every quarter of the world, in Palestine mingling personal apprehensions, and either a trembling sense of the insecurity of life, or a desperate determination to risk life itself for liberty, with the more appalling anticipations of the national destiny, the total extinction of the Heaven-ordained polity, the ruin of the city of Sion, and the Temple of God. To the ferocious and fanatical party, who gradually assumed the ascendancy, Christianity would be obnoxious, as secluding its peaceful followers from all participation in the hopes, the crimes, or what, in a worldly sense, might have been, not unjustly, considered the glories of the insurrection. Still, to whatever dangers or trials they were exposed, they were the desultory and casual attacks of individual hostility, rather than the systematic and determined persecution of one ruling party. Nor, perhaps, were they looked upon with the same animosity as many of the more eminent and influential of the Jews, who vainly attempted to allay the wild ferment. A general tradition, preserved by Eusebius, intimates that the Christian community, especially forewarned by Providence, left Jerusalem before the formation of the siege, and took refuge in the town of Pella, in the Trans-Jordanic province. According to Josephus, the same course was pursued by most of the higher order, who could escape in time from the sword of the Zealot or the Idumean. Rabbinical tradition dates from the same period the flight of the Sanhedrin from the Capital: its first place of refuge, without the walls of Jerusalem, was Jafna (Jamnia), from whence it passed to other cities, until its final settlement in Tiberias (1).

Probable  
effect of  
the fall of  
Jerusalem  
on Chris-  
tianity.

The Jewish war, the final desolation of the national polity; the destruction of the city, and the demolition of the Temple, were events which could not but influence the progress of Christianity to a far greater extent, than by merely depriving the Jews of the power to persecute under a legal form. While the Christian beheld in all these unexampled horrors the accomplishment of predictions uttered by his Lord, the less infatuated among the Jews could not be ignorant, that such predictions prevailed among the Christians. However the prudence of the latter might shrink from exasperating the more violent party, by the open promulgation of such dispiriting and ill-omened auguries, they must have transpired among those who were hesitating between the two parties, and powerfully tended to throw that fluctuating mass into the preponderating scale of Christianity. With some of the Jews, no doubt, the hope in the coming of the Messiah must have expired with the fall of the Temple. Not merely was the period of time, assigned, according to the general interpretation of the prophecies, for the appearance of the Deliverer, gone by, but their less stern and obli-

(1) Hist. of Jews, iii. 95.



nate Judaism must have begun to entertain apprehensions, that the visible rejection of the people intimated, not obscurely, the withdrawal of the Divine favour. They would thus be thrown back, as it were, upon Jesus of Nazareth as the only possible Messiah, and listen to his claims with greater inclination to believe. The alternative might seem to be between him and the desperate abandonment, or the adjournment to an indefinite period, of all their hopes of redemption. The hearts of many would be softened by the experience of personal suffering, or the sight of so many cases of individual misery. Christianity, with its consolatory promises, must have appeared the only refuge to those with whom the wretchedness of their temporal condition seemed to invalidate their hopes of an hereditary claim to everlasting life as children of Abraham; where they despaired of a temporal, they would be more inclined to accept a spiritual, and moral deliverance. At the same time the temporary advantage of the few converts, gained from such motives, would be counterbalanced by the more complete alienation of the Jewish mind from a race, who not only apostatised from the religion of their fathers, but by no means repudiated the most intimate connection with the race of Esau, for thus the dark hostility of the Jews began to denominate the Romans. By the absorption of this intermediate class, who had wavered between Christianity and Judaism, who either melted into the mass of the Christian party, or yielded themselves to the desperate infatuation of Judaism, the breach between the Jew and the Christian became more wide and irreparable. The prouder and more obstinate Jew sternly wrapped himself up in his sullen isolation; his aversion from the rest of mankind, under the sense of galling oppression, and of disappointed pride, settled into hard hostility. That which those of less fanatic Judaism found in Christianity, he sought in a stronger attachment to his own distinctive ceremonial; in a more passionate and deep-rooted conviction of his own prerogative, as the elect people of God. He surrendered himself, a willing captive, to the new priestly dominion, that of the Rabbins, which enslaved his whole life to a system of minute ordinances; he rejoiced in the rivetting and multiplying those bonds, which had been burst by Christianity, but which he wore as the badge of hopes still to be fulfilled, of glories which were at length to compensate for his present humiliation.

Effect on  
the Jews.

This more complete alienation between the Jew and the Christian tended to weaken that internal spirit of Judaism, which, nevertheless, was eradicated with the utmost difficulty, and indeed has perpetually revived within the bosom of Christianity under another name. Down to the destruction of Jerusalem, Palestine, or rather Jerusalem itself, was at once the centre and the source of this predominant influence. In foreign countries, as we shall presently explain, the irrepealable and eternal sanctity of the Mosaic

Law, was the repressive power which was continually struggling against the expansive force of Christianity. In Jerusalem this power was the holiness of the Temple, and therefore, with the fall of the Temple, this strongest bond, with which the heart of the Jewish Christian was rivetted to his old religion, at once burst asunder. To him the practice of his Lord and the Apostles had seemed to confirm the inalienable local sanctity of this "chosen dwelling" of God; and while it yet stood in all its undegraded splendour, to the Christian of Jerusalem it was almost impossible fully to admit the first principle of Christianity, that the Universal Father is worshipped in any part of his created universe with equal advantage. One mark by which the Jewish race was designated as the great religious caste of mankind, was thus for ever abolished. The synagogue had no reverential dignity, no old and sacred majesty to the mind of the convert, beyond his own equally humble and unimposing place of devotion. Hence even before the destruction of the Temple, this feeling depended upon the peculiar circumstances of the individual convert.

Though even among the foreign Jews the respect for the Temple was maintained by traditionary reverence, though the impost for its maintenance was regularly levied and willingly paid by the race of Israel in every part of the Roman empire, and occasional visits to the capital at the periods of the great festivals, revived in many the old sacred impressions, still, according to the universal principles of human nature, the more remote the residence, and the less frequent the impression of the Temple services upon the senses, the weaker became this first conservative principle of Jewish feeling.

Jewish attachment to the Law.

But there remained another element of that exclusiveness, which was the primary principle of the existing Judaism; that exclusiveness, which limiting the Divine favour to a certain race, would scarcely believe that foreign branches could be engrafted into the parent stock, even though incorporated with it; and still obstinately resisted the notion that Gentiles, without becoming Jews, could share in the blessings of the promised Messiah; or, in their state of uncircumcision, or at least of insubordination to the Mosaic ordinances, become heirs of the kingdom of Heaven.

The Law. What the Temple was to the inhabitant of Jerusalem, was the Law to the worshipper in the synagogue. As early, no doubt, as the present time, the book of the Law was the one great sacred object in every religious edifice of the Jews in all parts of the world. It was deposited in a kind of ark; it was placed in that part of the synagogue which represented the Holy of Holies; it was brought forth with solemn reverence by the "angel" of the assembly; it was heard as an "oracle of God" from the sanctuary. The whole rabbinical supremacy rested on their privilege as interpreters of

the law; and tradition, though, in fact, it assumed a co-ordinate authority, yet veiled its pretensions under the humbler character, of an exposition, a supplementary comment, on the heaven-enacted code. If we reascend, in our history, towards the period in which Christianity first opened its pale to the Gentiles, we shall find that this was the prevailing power by which the internal Judaism maintained its conflict with purer and more liberal Christianity within its own sphere. Even at Antioch, the Christian community had been in danger from this principle of separation; the Jewish converts, jealous of all encroachment upon the law, had drawn off and insulated themselves from those of the Gentiles (1). Peter withdrew within the narrower and more exclusive party; Barnabas alone, the companion and supporter of Paul, did not incline to the same course (2). It required all the energy and resolution of Paul to resist the example and influence of the older Apostles. His public expostulation had the effect of allaying the discord at Antioch; and the temperate and conciliatory measures adopted in Jerusalem, to a certain degree reunited the conflicting parties. Still, in most places where Paul established a new community, immediately after his departure this same spirit of Judaism seems to have rallied, and attempted to re-establish the great exclusive principle, that Christianity was no more than Judaism, completed by the reception of Jesus as the Messiah. The universal religion of Christ was thus in perpetual danger of being contracted into a national and ritual worship. The eternal law of Moses was still to maintain its authority with all its cumbrous framework of observances; and the Gentile proselytes who were ready to submit to the faith of Christ, with its simple and exquisite morality, were likewise to submit to all the countless provisions, and, now in many respects, unmeaning and unintelligible regulations, of diet, dress, manners, and conduct. This conflict may be traced most clearly in the Epistles of St. Paul, particularly in those to the remote communities in Galatia and in Rome. The former, written probably during the residence of the Apostle at Ephesus, was addressed to the Christians of Galatia, a district in the northern part of Asia Minor, occupied by a mingled population (3). The descendants of the Gaulish invaders, from whom the region derived its name, retained to a late period vestiges of their original race, in the Celtic dialect, and probably great numbers of Jews had settled in these quarters. Paul had twice visited the country, and his Epistle

(1) It is difficult to decide whether this dispute took place before or after the decree of the assembly in Jerusalem. Plank, in his *Geschichte des Christenthums*, places it before the decree, and on the whole this appears the most probable opinion. The event is noticed here as exemplifying the Judaizing spirit rather than in strict chronological order.

(2) Acts, xv.

(3) We decline the controversy concerning the place and time at which the different epistles were written; we shall give only the result, not the process of our investigations. This to the Galatians we suppose to have been written during St. Paul's first visit to Ephesus. (Acts, xix.)



The  
strength  
of the in-  
ternal Ju-  
daism  
within the  
church  
  
opposed  
by St.  
Paul.

was written at no long period after his second visit. But even in that short interval, Judaism had revived its pretensions. The adversaries of Paul had even gone so far as to disclaim him as an Apostle of Christianity; and before he vindicates the essential independence of the new faith, and declares the Jewish law to have been only a temporary institution (1), designed during a dark and barbarous period of human society, to keep alive the first principles of true religion, he has to assert his own divine appointment as a delegated teacher of Christianity (2).

The Epistle to the Romans (3) enters with more full and elaborate argument into the same momentous question. The History of the Roman community is most remarkable. It grew up in silence, founded by some unknown teachers (4), probably of those who were present in Jerusalem, at the first publication of Christianity by the Apostles. During the reign of Claudius it had made so much progress, as to excite open tumults and dissensions among the Jewish population of Rome; these animosities rose to such a height, that the attention of the government was aroused, and both parties expelled from the city. With some of these exiles, Aquila and Priscilla, St. Paul, as we have seen, formed an intimate connection during his first visit to Corinth: from them he received information of the extraordinary progress of the faith in Rome. The Jews seem quietly to have crept back to their old quarters, when the rigour with which the Imperial Edict was at first executed, had insensibly relaxed; and from these persons on their return to the capital, and most likely from other Roman Christians, who may have taken refuge in Corinth (5), or in other cities where Paul had founded Christian communities, the first, or at least the more perfect knowledge of the higher Christianity, taught by the Apostle of the Gentiles, would be conveyed to Rome. So complete indeed does he appear to consider the first establishment of Christianity in Rome, that he merely proposes to take that city in his way to a remote region, that of Spain (6). The manner in which he recounts, in the last chapter, the names of the more distinguished Roman

(1) Galat. iii. 19.

(2) Galat. i. 1, 2.

(3) This epistle, there seems no doubt, was written from Corinth, during St. Paul's second residence in that city.

(4) The foundation of the church of Rome by either St. Peter or St. Paul is utterly irreconcilable with any reasonable view of the Apostolic history. Among Roman Catholic writers, Count Stolberg abandons this point, and carries St. Peter to Rome for the first time at the commencement of Nero's reign. The account in the Acts seems to be so far absolutely conclusive. Many protestants of the highest learning are as unwilling to reject the general tradition of St. Peter's residence in Rome. This question will recur on another occasion. As to St. Paul, the first chapter of this epistle is positive evidence,

that the foundation of the church in Rome was long previous to his visit to the western metropolis of the world.

(5) It would appear probable that the greater part of the Christian community took refuge, with Aquila and Priscilla, in Corinth, and the neighbouring port of Cenchrea.

(6) The views of Paul on so remote a province as Spain, at so early a period of his journey, appear to justify the notion, that there was a considerable Jewish population in that country. It is not impossible that many of the "Libertines" may have made their way from Sardinia. There is a curious tradition among the Spanish Jews, that they were resident in that country before the birth of our Saviour, and consequently had no concern in his death. See Hist. of Jews, iii. p. 142.

converts, implies both that the community was numerous and that the name of Paul was held in high estimation by its leading members. It is evident that Christianity had advanced already beyond the Jewish population, and the question of necessary conformity to the Mosaic law was strongly agitated. It is therefore the main scope of this celebrated epistle to annul for ever this claim of the Mosaic law to a perpetual authority to show Christianity as a part of the providential design in the moral history of man, while Judaism was but a temporary institution, unequal to, as it was unintended for, the great end of revealing the immortality of mankind, altogether repealed by this more wide and universal system, which comprehends in its beneficent purposes the whole human race.

Closely allied with this main element of Judaism, which struggled so obstinately against the Christianity of St. Paul, was the notion of the approaching end of the world, the final consummation of all things in the second coming of the Messiah. It has been shown how essential and integral a part of the Jewish belief in the Messiah was this expectation of the final completion of his mission in the dissolution of the world, and the restoration of a paradisiacal state in which the descendants of Abraham were to receive their destined inheritance. To many of the Jewish believers the death and resurrection of Jesus were but (if the expression be warranted) the first acts of the great drama, which was hastening onward to its immediate close. They had bowed in mysterious wonder before the incongruity of the life and sufferings of Jesus, with the pre-conceived appearance of the "Great One," but expected their present disappointment to be almost instantly compensated by the appalling grandeur of the second coming of Christ. If, besides their descent from Abraham, and their reverence for the law of Moses, faith in Jesus as the Messiah was likewise necessary to secure their title to their peculiar inheritance, yet that faith was speedily to receive its reward; and the original Jewish conception of the Messiah, though put to this severe trial, though its completion was thus postponed, remained in full possession of the mind, and seemed to gather strength and depth of colouring from the constant state of high-wrought agitation in which it kept the whole moral being. This appears to have been the last Jewish illusion, from which the minds of the Apostles themselves were disenchanted; and there can be no doubt both that many of the early Christians almost hourly expected the final dissolution of the world, and that this opinion awed many timid believers into the profession of Christianity, and kept them in trembling subjection to its authority. The ambiguous predictions of Christ himself, in which the destruction of the Jewish Polity, and the ruin of the city and

Belief in  
the ap-  
proaching  
end of the  
world.

temple, were shadowed forth under images of more remote and universal import; the language of the Apostles, so liable to misinterpretation, that they were obliged publicly to correct the erroneous conclusions of their hearers (1), seemed to countenance an opinion so disparaging to the real glory of Christianity, which was only to attain its object, till after a slow contest of many centuries, perhaps of ages, with the evil of human nature. Wherever Christianity made its way into a mind deeply impregnated with Judaism, the moral character of the Messiah had still to maintain a strong contest with the temporal; and though experience yearly showed that the commencement of this visible kingdom was but more remote, at least the first generation of Christians passed away, before the majority had attained to more sober expectations; and at every period of more than ordinary religious excitement, a millennial, or at least a reign partaking of a temporal character, has been announced as on the eve of its commencement; the Christian mind has retrograded towards that state of Jewish error, which prevailed about the time of Christ's coming (2).

Hostility  
of Judaism  
and Chris-  
tianity.

As Christianity advanced in all other quarters of the world, its proselytes were in far larger proportion of Gentile than of Jewish descent. The synagogue and the church became more and more distinct, till they stood opposed in irreconcilable hostility. The Jews shrunk back into their stern seclusion, while the Christians were literally spreading in every quarter through the population of the empire. From this total suspension of intercourse, Judaism gradually died away within the Christian pale; time and experience corrected some of the more inveterate prejudices, new elements came into action. The Grecian philosophy, and at a later period influences still more adverse to that of Judaism, mingled with the prevailing Christianity. A kind of latent Judaism has, however, constantly lurked within the bosom of the Church. During the darker ages of Christianity, its sterner spirit harmonizing with the more barbarous state of the Christian mind, led to a frequent and injudicious appeal to the Old Testament: practically the great principle of Judaism, that the law, as emanating from Divine Wisdom, must be of eternal obligation, was admitted by conflicting parties; the books of Moses and the Gospel were appealed to as of equal authority; while the great characteristic of the old religion,

(1) 2 Thessalonians, ii. 1, 2. 2 Peter, iii. 4. 8.

(2) Compare the strange rabbinical notion of the fertility of the earth during the millennial reign of Christ, given by Irenæus as an actual prophecy of our Lord:—"Venient dies in quibus vineæ nascentur, singulæ decem millia palmitum habentes, et in unâ palmitē decem millia brachiorum, et in uno vero brachio dena millia flagellorum, et in unoquoque flagello dena millia botrorum, et in unoquoque borto dena millia acinorum; et unumquodque acinum expressum,

dabit viginti quinque metretas vini; et cum apprehendit aliquis sanctorum botrum, alius clamabit,—Botrus ego melior sum, me sume, et per me Dominum benedic." These chapters of Irenæus show the danger to which pure and spiritual Christianity was exposed from this gross and carnal Judaizing spirit. Irenæus (ch. 35.) positively denies that any of these images can be taken in an allegorical sense. De Hæres, v. c. 33.



its exclusiveness, its restriction of the divine blessings within a narrow and visible pale, was too much in accordance both with pride and superstition, not to reassert its ancient dominion. The sacerdotal and the sectarian spirit had an equal tendency to draw a wider or a more narrow line of demarcation around that which, in Jewish language, they pronounced the "Israel" of God, and to substitute some other criterion of Christianity for that exquisite perfection of piety, that sublimity of virtue, in disposition, in thought, and in act, which was the one true test of Christian excellence.

In Palestine, as the external conflict with Judaism was longest and most violent, so the internal influence of the old religion was latest obliterated. But when this separation at length took place, it was even more complete and decided than in any other countries. In Jerusalem, the Christians were perhaps still called, and submitted to be called Nazarenes, while the appellation which had been assumed at Antioch was their common designation in all other parts of the world. The Christian community of Jerusalem, which had taken refuge at Pella bore with them their unabated reverence for the law. But insensibly the power of that reverence decayed; and on the foundation of the new colony of Ælia, by the Emperor Hadrian, after the defeat of Barchocab, and the second total demolition of the city, the larger part having nominated a man of Gentile birth, Marcus, as their bishop, settled in the New City, and thus proclaimed their final and total separation from their Jewish ancestors (1). For not only must they have disclaimed all Jewish connection, to be permitted to take up their residence in the new colony, the very approach to which was watched by Roman outposts, and prohibited to every Jew under the severest penalties, but even the old Jewish feelings must have been utterly extinct. For what Jew, even if he had passed under the image of a swine which was erected in mockery over the Bethlehem Gate, would not have shrunk in horror at beholding the Hill of Moriah polluted by a Pagan temple, the worship of heathen deities profaning by their reeking incense, and their idolatrous sacrifices, the site of the Holy of Holies? The Christian absorbed in deeper veneration for the soil which had been hallowed by his Redeemer's footsteps, and was associated with his mysterious death and resurrection, was indifferent to the daily infringement of the Mosaic law which God himself had annulled by the substitution of the Christian faith, or to the desecration of the site of that temple which God had visibly abandoned.

The rest of the Judæo-Christian community at Pella, and in its neighbourhood, sank into an obscure sect, distinguished by their

Mark bi-  
shop of Je-  
rusalem,

(1) Euseb. H. E. iv. 6. Hieronym. Epist. ad Hedybiam. Quæst. 8.

obstinate rejection of the writings of St. Paul, and by their own Gospel, most probably the original Hebrew of St. Matthew. But the language, as well as the tenets of the Jews, were either proscribed by the Christians, as they still farther receded from Judaism, or fell into disuse(1); and whatever writings they possessed, whether originals or copies in the vernacular dialect of Palestine, of the genuine Apostolic books, or compilations of their own, entirely perished, so that it is difficult, from the brief notices which are extant, to make out their real nature and character.

In Palestine, as elsewhere, the Jew and the Christian were no longer confounded with each other, but constituted two totally different and implacably hostile races. The Roman government began to discriminate between them, as clearly appears from the permission to the Christians to reside in the New City, on the site of Jerusalem, which was interdicted to the Jews. Mutual hatred was increased by mutual alienation; the Jew, who had lost the power of persecuting, lent himself as a willing instrument to the heathen persecutor against those, whom he still considered as apostates from his religion. The less enlightened Christian added to the contempt of all the Roman world for the Jew a principle of deeper hostility. The language of Tertullian is that of triumph, rather than of commiseration for the degraded state of the Jew (2); strong jealousy of the pomp and power assumed by the patriarch of Tiberias may be trace in the vivid description of Origen(3). No sufferings could too profoundly debase, no pride could become those who shared in the hereditary guilt of the crucifixion of Jesus.

## CHAPTER III.

### CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM.

Relation-  
ship be-  
tween Ju-  
daism and  
Christia-  
nity.

THE conflict of Christianity with Judaism was a civil war; that with Paganism, the invasion and conquest of a foreign territory. In the former case it was the declared design of the innovation, to perfect the established constitution on its primary principles; to expand the yet undeveloped system, according to the original views of the Divine Legislator; in the latter it contemplated the total subversion of the existing order of things, a reconstruction of the whole moral and religious being of mankind. With the Jew, the abolition of the Temple service, and the abrogation of the Mosaic

(1) Sulpicius Severus, H. E. Mosheim, de Reb. Christ. ante Constant. Le Clerc, Hist. Ecclesiastica.

(2) Dispersi, palabundi, et cœli et soli sui extorres vagantur per orbem, sine nomine, sine

Deo rege, quibus nec advenarum jure terram patriam saltem vestigio salutare conceditur. Lib. cont. Judæos, 15.

(3) Origen. Epist. ad Africanum, Hist. of Jews, iii. 136.

Law, were indispensable to the perfect establishment of Christianity. The first was left to be accomplished by the frantic turbulence of the people, and the remorseless vengeance of Rome. Yet, after all, the Temple service maintained its more profound and indelible influence only over the Jew of Palestine; its hold upon the vast numbers which were settled in all parts of the world, was that of remote, occasional, traditionary reverence. With the foreign Jew, the service of the synagogue was his religion; and the synagogue, without any violent change, was transformed into a Christian church. The same Almighty God, to whom it was primarily dedicated, maintained his place; and the sole difference was, that he was worshipped through the mediation of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth. With the Pagan, the whole of his religious observances fell under the unsparing proscription. Every one of the countless temples and shrines, and sacred groves, and hallowed fountains, were to be desecrated by the abhorrent feelings of those who looked back with shame and contempt upon their old idolatries. Every image, from the living work of Phidias or Praxiteles, to the rude and shapeless Hermes or Terminus, was to become an unmeaning mass of wood or stone. In every city, town, or even village, there was a contest to be maintained, not merely against the general system of Polytheism, but against the local and tutelary deity of the place. Every public spectacle, every procession, every civil or military duty, was a religious ceremonial. Though later, when Christianity was in the ascendant, it might expel the deities of Paganism from some of the splendid temples, and convert them to its own use; though insensibly many of the usages of the Heathen worship crept into the more gorgeous and imposing ceremonial of triumphant Christianity; though even many of the vulgar superstitions incorporated themselves with the sacred Christian associations, all this reaction was long subsequent to the permanent establishment of the new religion. At first all was rigid and uncompromising hostility; doubts were entertained by the more scrupulous, whether meat exposed to public sale in the market, but which might have formed part of a sacrifice, would not be dangerously polluting to the Christian. The Apostle, though anxious to correct this sensitive scrupulousness, touches on the point with the utmost caution and delicacy (1).

Direct opposition of Christianity to Paganism.

The private life of the Jew was already, in part at least, fettered by the minute and almost Brahminical observances, with which the later Rabbins established their despotic authority over the mind. Still some of these usages harmonised with the spirit of Christianity; others were less inveterately rooted in the feelings of the foreign Jew. The trembling apprehension of any thing approach-

(1) 1 Corinth, x. 25—34.



Universal-  
ity of Pa-  
ganism.

ing to idolatry, the concentration of the heart's whole devotion upon the One Almighty God, prepared the soul for a Christian bias. The great struggle to Jewish feeling was the abandonment of circumcision, as the sign of their covenant with God. But this once over, baptism, the substituted ceremony, was perhaps already familiar to his mind; or, at least, emblematic ablutions were strictly in unison with the genius and the practice of his former religion. Some of the stricter Pharisaic distinctions were local and limited to Palestine, as, for instance, the payment of tithe; since the Temple tribute was the only national tax imposed by his religion on the foreign Jew. Their sectarian symbols, which in Palestine were publicly displayed upon their dress, were of course less frequent in foreign countries; and though worn in secret, might be dropped and abandoned by the convert to Christianity, without exciting observation. The whole life of the Heathen, whether of the philosopher who despised, or the vulgar who were indifferent to, the essential part of the religion, was pervaded by the spirit of Polytheism. It met him in every form, in every quarter, in every act and function of every day's business; not merely in the graver offices of the state, in the civil and military acts of public men; in the senate which commenced its deliberations with sacrifice; in the camp, the centre of which was a consecrated temple: his domestic hearth was guarded by the Penates, or by the ancestral gods of his family or tribe; by land he travelled under the protection of one tutelary divinity, by sea of another; the birth, the bridal, the funeral, had each its presiding deity; the very commonest household utensils and implements were cast in mythological forms; he could scarcely drink without being reminded of making a libation to the gods; and the language itself was impregnated with constant allusions to the popular religion.

However, as a religion, Polytheism was undermined and shaken to the base, yet, as part of the existing order of things, its inert resistance would every where present a strong barrier against the invasion of a foreign faith. The priesthood of an effete religion, as long as the attack is conducted under the decent disguise of philosophical inquiry, or is only aimed at the moral or the speculative part of the faith; as long as the form, of which alone they are become the ministers, is permitted to subsist, go on calmly performing the usual ceremonial: neither their feelings nor their interests are actively alive to the veiled and insidious encroachments which are made upon its power and stability. In the Roman part of the western world, the religion was an integral part of the state: the greatest men of the last days of the Republic, the Ciceros and Cæsars, the Emperors themselves, aspired to fill the pontifical offices, and discharged their duties with grave solemnity, however their declared philosophical opinions were subversive of the whole sys-

tem of Polytheism. Men might disbelieve, deny, even substitute foreign superstitions for the accustomed rites of their country, provided they did not commit any overt act of hostility, or publicly endeavour to bring the ceremonial into contempt. Such acts were not only impieties, they were treason against the majesty of Rome. In the Grecian cities, on the other hand, the interests and the feelings of the magistracy and the priesthood, were less intimately connected; the former, those at least who held the higher authority, being Roman, the latter local or municipal. Though it was the province of the magistrate to protect the established religion, and it was sufficiently the same with his own, to receive his regular worship, yet the strength with which he would resist, or the jealousy with which he would resent any dangerous innovation, would depend on the degree of influence possessed by the sacerdotal body, and the pride or enthusiasm which the people might feel for their local worship. Until, then, Christianity had made such progress as to produce a visible diminution in the attendance on the Pagan worship; until the temples were comparatively deserted, and the offerings less frequent, the opposition encountered by the Christian teacher, or the danger to which he would be exposed, would materially depend on the peculiar religious circumstances of each city (1).

(1) In a former publication the author attempted to represent the manner in which the strength of Polytheism, and its complete incorporation with the public and private life of its votaries, might present itself to the mind of a Christian teacher on his first entrance into a heathen city. The passage has been quoted in Archbishop Whately's book on Rhetoric.

"Conceive then the Apostles of Jesus Christ, the tent-maker or the fisherman, entering as strangers into one of the splendid cities of Syria, Asia Minor, or Greece. Conceive them, I mean, as undowered with miraculous powers, having adopted their itinerant system of teaching from human motives, and for human purposes alone. As they pass along to the remote and obscure quarter, where they expect to meet with precarious hospitality among their countrymen, they survey the strength of the established religion, which it is their avowed purpose to overthrow. Every where they behold temples, on which the utmost extravagance of expenditure has been lavished by succeeding generations; idols of the most exquisite workmanship, to which, even if the religious feeling of adoration is enfeebled, the people are strongly attached by national or local vanity. They meet processions in which the idle find perpetual occupation, the young excitement, the voluptuous a continual stimulant to their passions. They behold a priesthood numerous, sometimes wealthy; nor are these alone wedded by interest to the established faith; many of the trades, like those of the makers of silver shrines at Ephesus, are pledged to the support of that to which they owe their maintenance. They pass a magnificent theatre, on the splendour and success of which the popularity of the existing authorities mainly depends; and in which the serious exhibitions are essentially religious, the lighter as intimately

connected with the indulgence of the baser passions. They behold another public building, where even worse feelings, the cruel and the sanguinary, are pampered by the animating contests of wild beasts and of gladiators, in which they themselves may shortly play a dreadful part,

Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday!

Show and spectacle are the characteristic enjoyments of a whole people, and every show and spectacle is either sacred to the religious feelings, or incentive to the lusts of the flesh; those feelings which must be entirely eradicated, those lusts which must be brought into total subjection to the law of Christ. They encounter likewise itinerant jugglers, diviners, magicians, who impose upon the credulous to excite the contempt of the enlightened; in the first case, dangerous rivals to those who should attempt to propagate a new faith by imposture and deception: in the latter, naturally tending to prejudice the mind against all miraculous pretensions whatever: here, like Elymas, endeavouring to outdo the signs and wonders of the Apostles, thereby throwing suspicion on all asserted supernatural agency, by the frequency and clumsiness of their delusions. They meet philosophers, frequently itinerant like themselves; or teachers of new religions, priests of Isis and Serapis, who have brought into equal discredit what might otherwise have appeared a proof of philanthropy, the performing laborious journeys at the sacrifice of personal ease and comfort, for the moral and religious improvement of mankind; or at least have so accustomed the public mind to similar pretensions, as to take away every attraction from their boldness or novelty. There are also the teachers of the different mysteries, which would engross all the anxiety of the inquisitive,

The narrative in the Acts, as far as it proceeds, is strikingly in accordance with this state of things. The adventures of the Apostles in the different cities of Asia Minor and Greece are singularly characteristic of the population and the state of the existing Polytheism in each. It was not, till it had extended beyond the borders of Palestine, that Christianity came into direct collision with Paganism. The first Gentile convert, admitted into the Christian community by St. Peter, Cornelius, if not a proselyte to Judaism, approached very nearly to it. He was neither polytheist nor philosopher; he was a worshipper of One Almighty Creator, and familiar, it should seem, with the Jewish belief in angelic appearances. Even beyond the Holy Land, Christianity did not immediately attempt to address the general mass of the Pagan community; its first collisions were casual and accidental; its operations commenced in the synagogue; a separate community was not invariably formed, or, if formed, appeared to the common observation only a new assemblage for Jewish worship; to which, if Heathen proselytes gathered in more than ordinary numbers, it was but the same thing on a larger, which had excited little jealousy on a smaller scale (1).

Christi-  
nity in  
Cyprus.

During the first journey of St. Paul, it is manifest that in Cyprus particularly, and in the towns of Asia Minor, the Jewish worship was an object of general respect: and Christianity appearing as a modification of Jewish belief, shared in that deference which had been long paid to the national religion of the Jewish people. Sergius Paulus (2), the governor of Cyprus, under the influence of the Jew Elymas, was already more than half, if not altogether alienated from the religion of Rome. Barnabas and Paul appeared before him at his own desire; and their manifest superiority over his former teacher easily transformed him from an imperfect proselyte to Judaism into a convert to Christianity.

Antioch in  
Pisidia.

At Antioch in Pisidia there was a large class of proselytes to Judaism, who espoused the cause of the Christian teachers, and who probably formed the more considerable part of the Gentile hearers, addressed by Paul, on his rejection by the leading Jews of that city.

Lystra.

At Lystra (3), in Lycaonia, the Apostle appears for the first time, in the centre, as it were, of a Pagan population; and it is remarka-

perhaps excite, even if they did not satisfy, the hopes of the more pure and lofty-minded. Such must have been among the obstacles which must have forced themselves on the calmer moments of the most ardent; such the overpowering difficulties of which it would be impossible to overlook the importance, or elude the force; which required no sober calculation to estimate, no laborious inquiry to discover; which met and confronted them wherever they went, and which, either in desperate presumption, or deliberate reliance on their own preternatural powers, they must have contemned and defied."—Bampton Lectures, p. 269. 273.

(1) The extent to which Jewish proselytism

had been carried, is a most intricate question. From the following passage, quoted from Seneca by St. Augustin, if *genuine*, it would seem that it had made great progress:—"Cum interim usque eo sceleratissime gentis consuetudo convaluit, ut per omnes terras jure recepta sit, victi victoribus leges dederunt. St. Augustin positively asserts that this sentence does not include the Christians. De Civit. Dei, vi. 11.

(2) Acts, xiii. 6—12.

(3) Acts, xiv. 6—19. There were Jews resident at Lystra, as appears by Acts, xvi. 1, 2. Timothy was the offspring of an intermarriage between a Jewish woman and a Greek: his name is Greek.



ble, that in this wild and inland region, we find the old barbarous religion maintaining a lively and commanding influence over the popular mind. In the more civilised and commercial parts of the Roman world, in Ephesus, in Athens, or in Rome, such extraordinary cures as that of the cripple at Lystra, might have been publicly wrought, and might have excited a wondering interest in the multitude : but it may be doubted, whether the lowest or most ignorant would have had so much faith in the old fabulous appearances of their own deities, as immediately to have imagined their actual and visible appearance in the persons of these surprising strangers. It is only in the remote and savage Lystra, where the Greek language had not predominated over the primitive barbarous dialect (1) (probably a branch of the Cappadocian), that the popular emotion instantly metamorphoses these public benefactors into the Jove and Mercury of their own temples. The inhabitants actually make preparation for sacrifice, and are with difficulty persuaded to consider such wonder-working men to be of the same nature with themselves. Nor is it less characteristic of the versatility of a rude people, that no sooner is the illusion dispelled, than they join with the hostile Jews in the persecution of those very men, whom their superstition, but a short time before, had raised into objects of divine worship.

In the second, and more extensive journey of St. Paul, having parted from Barnabas (2), he was accompanied by Timotheus and Silas or Sylvanus, but of the Asiatic part of this journey, though it led through some countries of remarkable interest in the history of Paganism, no particulars are recorded. Phrygia, which was a kind of link between Greece and the remoter East, still at times sent out into the Western world its troops of frantic Orgiasts; and the Phrygian vied with the Isiac and Mithraic mysteries in its influence in awakening the dormant fanaticism of the Roman world. It is probable, that, in these regions, the Apostle confined himself to the Jewish settlers and their proselytes. In Galatia, it is clear, that the converts were almost entirely of Hebrew descent. The vision, which invited the Apostle to cross from Troas to Macedonia, led him into a new region, where his countrymen, though forming flourishing communities in many of the principal towns, were not, except perhaps at Corinth, by any means so numerous as in the greater part of Asia Minor. His vessel touched at Samothrace, where the most ancient and remarkable mysteries still retained their sanctity and veneration in that holy and secluded island. At Philippi he first came into collision with those whose interests were concerned in the maintenance of the popular religion. Though these were only indi-

Phrygia.

Galatia.

Philippi.

(1) Jablonski, *Dissertatio de Lingua Lycaonica*, reprinted in Valpy's edition of Stephens's *Thesaurus*.

(2) Acts, xv. 36. to xviii. 18.

viduals, whose gains were at once put an end to by the progress of Christianity, the owners of the female soothsayer of Philippi were part of a numerous and active class, who subsisted on the public credulity. The proseucha, or oratory, of the Jews (the smaller place of worship, which they always established when their community was not sufficiently flourishing to maintain a synagogue), was, as usual, by the water side. The river, as always in Greece and in all southern countries, was the resort of the women of the city, partly for household purposes, partly perhaps for bathing. Many of this sex were in consequence attracted by the Jewish proseucha, and had become, if not proselytes, at least very favourably inclined to Judaism. Among these was Lydia, whose residence was at Thyatira, and who, from her trading in the costly purple dye, may be supposed a person of considerable wealth and influence. Having already been so far enlightened by Judaism as to worship the One God, she became an immediate convert to the Christianity of St. Paul. Perhaps the influence or the example of so many of her own sex, worked upon the mind of a female of a different character and occupation. She may have been an impostor, but more probably was a young girl of excited temperament, whose disordered imagination was employed by men of more artful character for their own sordid purposes. The enthusiasm of this "divining" damsel now took another turn. Impressed with the language and manner of Paul, she suddenly deserted her old employers, and throwing herself into the train of the Apostle, proclaimed, with the same exalted fervour, his divine mission, and the superiority of his religion. Paul, troubled with the publicity, and the continual repetition of her outcries, exorcised her in the name of Jesus Christ. Her wild excitement died away; the spirit passed from her; and her former masters found that she was no longer fit for their service. She could no longer be thrown into those paroxysms of temporary derangement, in which her disordered language was received as oracular of future events. This conversion produced a tumult throughout the city; the interests of a powerful body were at stake, for the trade of soothsaying, at this time, was both common and lucrative. The employers of the prophetess enflamed the multitude. The Apostle and his attendants were seized, arraigned before the magistrates, as introducing an *unlawful* religion. The magistrates took part against them. They suffered the ordinary punishment of disturbers of the peace; were scourged and cast into prison. While their hymn, perhaps their evening hymn, was heard through the prison, a violent earthquake shook the whole building; the doors flew open, and the fetters, by which probably they were chained to the walls, were loosened. The affrighted jailor, who was responsible for their appearance, expected them to avail themselves of this opportunity of escape, and in his despair was about to commit suicide. His hand

was arrested by the calm voice of Paul, and to his wonder he found the prisoners remaining quietly in their cells. His fears and his admiration wrought together; and the jailor of Philippi, with his whole family, embraced the Christian faith. The magistrates, when they found that Paul had the privilege of Roman citizenship, were in their turn alarmed at their hasty infringement of that sacred right, released them honourably from the prison, and were glad to prevail upon them to depart peacefully from the city. Thus, then, we have already seen Christianity in collision with Polytheism, under two of its various forms: at Lystra, as still the old poetic faith of a barbarous people, insensible to the progress made elsewhere in the human mind, and devoutly believing the wonders of their native religion; in Philippi, a provincial town in a more cultivated part of Greece, but still at no high state of intellectual advancement, as connected with the vulgar arts, not of the established priesthood, but of itinerant traders in popular superstition. In Athens Paganism has a totally different character, inquiring, argumentative, sceptical, Polytheism in form, and that form embodying all that could excite the imagination of a highly polished people; in reality admitting and delighting in the freest discussion, altogether inconsistent with sincere belief in the ancient and established religion.

Contrast  
of Poly-  
theism at  
Lystra,  
Philippi,  
and  
Athens.

Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and his companions arrived at Thessalonica; but in this city, as well as in Berea, their chief intercourse appears to have been with the Jews. The riot by which they were expelled from Thessalonica, though blindly kept up by the disorderly populace, was instigated by Jason the chief of the Jewish community. Having left his companions, Timotheus and Silas, at Berea, Paul arrived alone at Athens.

Thessalo-  
nica.

At Athens, the centre at once and capital of the Greek philosophy and Heathen superstition, takes place the first public and direct conflict between Christianity and Paganism. Up to this time there is no account of any one of the Apostles taking his station in the public street or market-place, and addressing the general multitude (1). Their place of teaching had invariably been the synagogue of their nation, or, as at Philippi, the neighbourhood of their customary place of worship. Here, however, Paul does not confine himself to the synagogue, or to the society of his countrymen and their proselytes. He takes his stand in the public market-place (probably not the Ceramicus, but the Eretriac Forum) (2) which, in the reign of Augustus, had begun to be more frequented, and at the top of which was the famous portico, from which the Stoics assumed their name. In Athens, the appearance of a new public teacher, instead of offending the popular feelings, was too familiar to excite astonishment,

Athens.

(1) This appears to be intimated in the expression, Acts, xvii. 16. "His spirit was stirred within him when he saw the city, wholly given to idolatry."

(2) Strabo, x. 447.



Paul on  
the Areo-  
pagus.

Speech of  
Paul.

and was rather welcomed, as promising some fresh intellectual excitement. In Athens, hospitable to all religions and all opinions, the foreign and Asiatic appearance, and possibly the less polished tone and dialect of Paul, would only awaken the stronger curiosity. Though they affect at first (probably the philosophic part of his hearers), to treat him as an idle "babbler," and others (the vulgar, alarmed for the honour of their deities) supposed that he was about to introduce some new religious worship, which might endanger the supremacy of their own tutelar divinities; he is conveyed, not without respect, to a still more public and commodious place, from whence he may explain his doctrines to a numerous assembly without disturbance. On the Areopagus (1), the Christian leader takes his stand, surrounded on every side with whatever was noble, beautiful, and intellectual in the older world, temples, of which the materials were only surpassed by the architectural grace and majesty; statues, in which the ideal Anthropomorphism of the Greeks had almost elevated the popular notions of the Deity, by embodying it in human forms of such exquisite perfection; public edifices, where the civil interests of man had been discussed with the acuteness and versatility of the highest Grecian intellect, in all the purity of the inimitable Attic dialect, where oratory had obtained its highest triumphs by "wielding at will the fierce democracy;" the walks of the philosophers, who unquestionably, by elevating the human mind to an appetite for new and nobler knowledge, had prepared the way for a loftier and purer religion. It was in the midst of these elevating associations, to which the student of Grecian literature in Tarsus, the reader of Menander, and of the Greek philosophical poets, could scarcely be entirely dead or ignorant, that Paul stands forth to proclaim the lowly yet authoritative religion of Jesus of Nazareth. His audience was chiefly formed from the two prevailing sects, the Stoics and Epicureans, with the populace, the worshippers of the established religion. In his discourse, the heads of which are related by St. Luke, Paul, with singular felicity, touches on the peculiar opinions of each class among his hearers (2); he expands the popular religion into a higher philosophy; he imbues philosophy with a profound sentiment of religion (3).

It is impossible not to examine with the utmost interest the whole course of this, (if we consider its remote consequences, and suppose it the first full and public argument of Christianity against the

(1) It has been supposed by some that Paul was summoned before the Court of the Areopagus, who took cognizance of causes relating to religion. But there is no indication, in the narrative, of any of the forms of a judicial proceeding.

(2) Paulus summâ arte orationem suam ita temperat, ut modo cum vulgo contra philosophos, modo cum philosophis contra plebem, modo contra utrosque pugnet. Rosenmüller in loco

(3) The art and propriety of this speech is considerably marred by the mistranslation of one word in our version, *δαιμονοστέπρους*,—which does not imply reproof, as in the rendering "too superstitious." Conciliation, not offence, of the public feeling, especially at the opening of a speech, is the first principle of all oratory, more particularly of Christian teaching.

heathen religion and philosophy,) perhaps the most extensively and permanently effective oration ever uttered by man. We may contemplate Paul as the representative of Christianity, in the presence, as it were, of the concentrated religion of Greece; and of the spirits, if we may so speak, of Socrates, and Plato, and Zeno. The opening of the apostle's speech is according to those most perfect rules of art which are but the expressions of the general sentiments of nature. It is calm, temperate, conciliatory. It is no fierce denunciation of idolatry, no contemptuous disdain of the prevalent philosophic opinions; it has nothing of the sternness of the ancient Jewish prophet, nor the taunting defiance of the later Christian polemic. "Already the religious people of Athens had, unknowingly indeed, worshipped the universal deity, for they had an altar to the Unknown God (1). The nature, the attributes of this sublimer being, hitherto adored in ignorant and unintelligent homage, he came to unfold. This God rose far above the popular notion; he could not be confined in altar or temple, or represented by any visible image. He was the universal father of mankind, even of the earth-born Athenians, who boasted that they were of an older race than the other families of man, and coeval with the world itself. He was the fountain of life, which pervaded and sustained the universe; he had assigned their separate dwellings to the separate families of man." Up to a certain point in this higher view of the Supreme Being, the philosopher of the Garden, as well as of the Porch, might listen with wonder and admiration. It soared, indeed, high above the vulgar religion: but in the lofty and serene Deity, who disdained to dwell in the earthly temple, and needed nothing from the hand of man (2), the Epicurean might almost suppose that he heard the language of his own teacher. But the next sentence, which asserted the providence of God as the active, creative energy, — as the conservative, the ruling, the ordaining principle, — annihilated at once the atomic theory, and the government of blind chance, to which Epicurus ascribed the origin and preservation of the universe, "This high and impassive deity, who dwelt aloof in serene and majestic superiority to all want, was perceptible in some mysterious manner by man: his all-pervading providence comprehended the whole human race; man was in constant union with the Deity, as an offspring with its parent." And still the Stoic might applaud with complacent satisfaction the ardent words of the Apostle; he might approve the lofty condemnation of idolatry. "We, thus of divine descent, ought to think more nobly of our universal Father than to suppose that the Godhead is like unto

(1) Of all the conjectures (for all is purely conjectural,) on the contested point of the "altar to the Unknown God," the most ingenious and natural, in our opinion, is that of Eichhorn. There were, he supposes, very ancient altars, older perhaps than the art of writing, or on which the

inscription had been effaced by time: on these the piety of later ages had engraven the simple words, "To the Unknown God."

(2) Needing nothing: the coincidence with the "nihil indiga nostri" of Lucretius is curious, even if accidental.

gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art or man's device." But this divine Providence was far different from the stern and all-controlling Necessity, the inexorable Fatalism of the Stoic system. While the moral value of human action was recognised by the solemn retributive judgment to be passed on all mankind, the dignity of Stoic virtue was lowered by the general demand of repentance. The perfect man, the moral king, was deposed, as it were, and abased to the general level; he had to learn new lessons in the school of Christ; lessons of humility and conscious deficiency, the most directly opposed to the principles and the sentiments of his philosophy.

The great Christian doctrine of the resurrection closed the speech of Paul; a doctrine received with mockery, perhaps by his Epicurean hearers, with suspension of judgment, probably, by the Stoic, with whose theory of the final destruction of the world by fire, and his tenet of future retribution, it might appear in some degree to harmonise. Some, however, became declared converts; among whom are particularly named Dionysius, a man of sufficient distinction to be a member of the famous court of the Areopagus, and a woman, named Damaris, probably of considerable rank and influence.

At Athens, all this free discussion on topics relating to the religious and moral nature of man, and involving the authority of the existing religion, passed away without disturbance. The jealous reverence for the established faith, which, conspiring with its perpetual ally, political faction, had in former times caused the death of Socrates, the exile of Stilpo, and the proscription of Diagoras the Melian, had long died away. With the loss of independence, political animosities had subsided, and the toleration of philosophical and religious indifference allowed the utmost latitude to speculative inquiry, however ultimately dangerous to the whole fabric of the national religion. Yet Polytheism still reigned in Athens in its utmost splendour: the temples were maintained with the highest pomp; the Eleusinian Mysteries, in which religion and philosophy had in some degree coalesced, attracted the noblest and the wisest of the Romans, who boasted of their initiation in these sublime secrets. Athens was thus, at once, the head-quarters of Paganism, and at the same time the place where Paganism most clearly betrayed its approaching dissolution.

From Athens, the Apostle passes to Corinth. Corinth was at this time the common emporium of the eastern and western divisions of the Roman Empire. It was the Venice of the Old World, in whose streets the continued stream of commerce, either flowing from, or towards the great capital of the world, out of all the eastern territories, met and crossed (1). The basis of the population of

Corinth,  
A. D. 52.

(1) After its destruction by Mummius, Corinth was restored, beautified, and colonised by Julius



Corinth was Roman, of very recent settlement; but colonists from all quarters had taken up their permanent residence in a place so admirably adapted for mercantile purposes. In no part of the Roman empire were both the inhabitants and the travellers through the city so various and mingled; no where, therefore, would a new religion, at the same time spread with so much rapidity, and send out the ramifications of its influence with so much success; and at the same time excite so little observation amid the stir of business and the perpetual influx and afflux of strangers, or be less exposed to jealous opposition. Even the priesthood, newly settled, like the rest of the colony, could command no ancient reverence; and in the perpetual mingling and confusion of all dresses and dialects, no doubt there was the same concourse of religious itinerants of every description (1). At Corinth, therefore, but for the hostility of his countrymen, the Christian Apostle might, even longer than the eighteen months which he passed in that city, have preserved his peaceful course. The separation which at once took place between the Jewish and the Christian communities in Corinth—the secession of Paul from the synagogue into a neighbouring house,—might have allayed even this intestine ferment, had not the progress of Christianity, and the open adoption of the new faith by one of the chiefs of the synagogue, reawakened that fierce animosity which had already caused the expulsion of both parties from Rome, and the seeds of which no doubt rankled in the hearts of many. Here, therefore, for the first time, Christianity was brought under the cognisance of a higher authority than the municipal magistrate of one of the Macedonian cities. The contemptuous dismissal of the cause by the Proconsul of Achaia, as beneath the majesty of the Roman tribunal; his refusal to interfere, when some of the populace, with whom the Christians were apparently the favoured party, on the repulse of the accusing Jews from the seat of justice, fell upon one of them, named Sosthenes, and maltreated him with con-

Gallio.  
A. D. 53.

Cæsar.—Strabo, viii. 381. For its history, wealth, and commercial situation, Diod. Sic. Fragm. The profligacy of Corinthian manners was likewise proverbial:—*πολὺν οἰκίστη τῶν οὐσῶν τε καὶ γεγεννημένων ἐπαρροδιτοτάτην*. Dio. Chrysost. Orat. 37. v. ii. p. 110.

(1) Corinth was a favourite resort of the Sophists (Aristid. Isthm. Athenæus, l. xiii.), and in an oration of Dio Chrysostom there is a lively and graphic description of what may be called one of the fairs of antiquity, the Isthmian games, which happily illustrates the general appearance of society. Among the rest, the Cynic philosopher, Diogenes, appears, and endeavours to attract an audience among the vast and idle multitude. He complains, however, “that if he were a travelling dentist or an oculist, or had any infallible remedy for the spleen or the gout, all who were afflicted with such diseases would have thronged around him; but as he only professed to cure mankind of vice, ignorance, and profligacy, no one troubled himself to seek a

remedy for those less grievous maladies.” “And there was around the Temple of Neptune a crowd of miserable Sophists, shouting and abusing one another; and of their so called disciples, fighting with each other; and many authors reading their works, to which nobody paid any attention; and many poets, chaunting their poems, with others praising them; and many jugglers, showing off their tricks; and many prodigy-mongers noting down their wonders; and a thousand rhetoricians perplexing causes; and not a few shopkeepers retailing their wares wherever they could find a customer. And presently some approached the philosopher,—not indeed the Corinthians; for as they saw him every day in Corinth, they did not expect to derive any advantage from hearing him,—but those that drew near him were strangers, each of whom having listened a short time, and asked a few questions, made his retreat, from fear of his rebukes.” Dio. Chrys. Orat. viii.

siderable violence, shows how little even the most enlightened men yet comprehended the real nature of the new religion. The affair was openly treated as an unimportant sectarian dispute about the national faith of the Jews. The mild (1) and popular character of Gallio, his connection with his brother Seneca (2), in whose philosophic writings the morality of Heathenism had taken a higher tone than it ever assumes, unless perhaps, subsequently, in the works of Marcus Antoninus, excite regret that the religion of Christ was not brought under his observation in a manner more likely to conciliate his attention. The result of this trial was the peaceful establishment of Christianity in Corinth, where, though secure from the violence of the Jews, it was however constantly exposed, by its situation, to the intrusion of new comers, with different modifications of Christian opinions. This, therefore, was the first Christian community which was rent into parties, and in which the authority of the Apostle was perpetually wanting to correct opinions not purely Jewish in their origin.

Thus eventful was the second journey of Paul : over so wide a circuit had Christianity already been disseminated, almost entirely by his personal exertions. In many of the most flourishing and populous cities of Greece communities were formed, which were continually enlarging their sphere.

The third journey (3), starting from the head-quarters of Christianity, Antioch, led Paul again through the same regions of Asia, Galatia, and Phrygia. But now, instead of crossing over into Macedonia, he proceeded along the west of Asia Minor, to the important city of Ephesus. Ephesus (4), at this time, may be considered the capital, the chief mercantile city, of Asia Minor. It was inhabited by a mingled population; and, probably, united, more than any city in the East, Grecian and Asiatic habits, manners, and superstitions (5). Its celebrated temple was one of the most splendid models of Grecian architecture; the image of the goddess retained the symbolic form of the old Eastern nature worship. It was one of the great schools of magic; the Ephesian amulets, or talismans (6), were in high request. Polytheism had thus effected an amicable union of Grecian art with Asiatic mysticism and magical superstition : the venter of the silver shrines, which represented the great Temple, one of the wonders of the world, vied with the trader in charms and in all the appurtenances of witchcraft. Great numbers of Jews had long inhabited the chief cities of Asia Minor; many had

Ephesus,  
A. D. 54.

(1) *Nemo mortalium uni tam dulcis est quam hic omnibus.* Senec. Nat. Quæst. 4. *Præf. Hoc plusquam Senecam dedisse mundo. Et dulcem generasse Gallionem.* Stat. Sylv. ii. 7. Compare Dion. Cass. lx.

(2) Among the later forgeries was a correspondence between Seneca and St. Paul: and many Christian writers, as unacquainted with the history of their own religion as with the

state of the heathen mind, have been anxious to trace all that is striking and beautiful in the writings of the Stoic to Christian influence.

(3) Acts, xviii. 23. to xxi. 3.

(4) Rosenmüller, *das alte und neue Morgenland*, 6--50.

(5) Compare Matter, *Hist. du Gnosticisme*, i. 137.

(6) ἑρεσία γράμματα.

attained to opulence, and were of great mercantile importance. Augustus had issued a general rescript to the cities of Asia Minor for the protection of the Jews, securing to them the freedom of religious worship; legalising the transmission of the Temple tribute to Jerusalem by their own appointed receivers; and making the plunder of their synagogues sacrilege (1). Two later edicts of Agrippa and Julius Antonius, proconsuls, particularly addressed to the magistracy of Ephesus, acknowledged and confirmed the imperial decree. From this period, nothing can yet have occurred to lessen their growing prosperity, or to lower them in the estimation of their Gentile neighbours. Among the numerous Jews in this great city, Paul found some, who having been in Judæa during the teaching of John the Baptist, had embraced his opinions, and received baptism, either at his hands or from his disciples, but appear not only not to have visited the mother country, but to have kept up so little connection with it, as to be almost, if not entirely, ignorant of the promulgation of Christianity. The most eminent of them, Apollos, had left the city for Corinth, where meeting with St. Paul's companions, the Roman Jews, Priscilla and Aquila, he had embraced Christianity, and being a man of eloquence, immediately took such a lead in the community, as to be set up by one of the conflicting parties as a kind of rival of the Apostle. The rest of this sect in Ephesus willingly listened to the teaching of Paul: to the number of twelve, they "received the Holy Ghost," and thus became the nucleus of a new Christian community in Ephesus. The followers of John the Baptist, no doubt, conformed in all respects with the customary worship of their countrymen: their peculiar opinions were superinduced, at it were, upon their Judaism; they were still regular members of the synagogue. In the synagogue therefore Paul commenced his labours, the success of which was so great as evidently to excite the hostility of the leading Jews: hence, here likewise, a complete separation took place; the Apostle obtained possession of a school belonging to a person named Tyrannus, most likely a Grecian sophist, and the Christian church stood alone, as a distinct and independent place of divine worship.

Disciples  
of John  
the Bap-  
tist.

Paul continued to reside in Ephesus two years, during which the rapid extension of Christianity was accelerated by many wonderful cures. In Ephesus, such cures were likely to be sought with avidity; but in this centre of magical superstition would by no means command belief in the divine mission of the worker of miracles; Jews, as well as Heathens, admitted the unlimited power of supernatural agencies, and vied with each other in the success of their rival enchantments. The question then would arise, by what more than usually potent charm, or mysterious power, such extra-

Ephesian  
magic.

(1) *Ἰεφοσυλία*, Joseph. Ant. xvi. 6. Krebs *Decreta Romanorum pro Judæis*. Lipsiæ, 1778.



Jewish  
exorcists.

ordinary works were wrought. The followers of both religions had implicit faith in the magic influence of certain names. With the Jews, this belief was moulded up with their most sacred traditions. It was by the holy Tetra Grammaton (1), the Sem-hamphorash, according to the Alexandrian historian of the Jews, that Moses and their gifted ancestors wrought all the wonders of their early history. Pharaoh trembled before it, and the plagues of Egypt had been obedient to the utterance of the awful monosyllable, the ineffable name of the Deity. Cabbalism, which assigned at first sanctity, and afterwards power over the intermediate spirits of good and evil, to certain combinations of letters and numbers, though not yet cultivated to its height, existed, no doubt, in its earlier elements, among the Jews of this period. Upon this principle, some of the Jews who practised exorcism attributed all these prodigies of St. Paul to some secret power possessed by the name of Jesus. Among these were some men of high rank, the sons of one of the high priests, named Sceva. They seem to have believed in the superstition by which they ruled the minds of others, and supposed that the talismanic influence, which probably depended on cabbalistic art, was inseparably connected with the pronunciation of this mystic name. Those whom this science or this trade of exorcism (according as it was practised by the credulous or the crafty) employed for their purposes, were those unhappy beings of disordered imagination, possessed, according to the belief of the times, by evil spirits. One of these, on whom they were trying this experiment, had probably before been strongly impressed with the teaching of Paul, and the religion which he preached; and irritated by the interference of persons whom he might know to be hostile to the Christian party, assaulted them with great violence, and drove them naked and wounded out of the house (2).

This extraordinary event was not only fatal to the pretensions of the Jewish exorcists, but at once seemed to put to shame all who believed and who practised magical arts, and the manufacturers of spells and talismans. Multitudes came forward, and voluntarily gave up, to be burned, not only all their store of amulets, but even the books which contained the magical formularies. Their value, as probably they were rated and estimated at a high price, amounted to 50,000 pieces of silver, most likely, Attic drachms, or Roman silver denarii, a coin very current in Asia Minor, and worth about  $7\frac{1}{2}d.$  of our money. The sum would thus make something more than 1600*l.*

(1) Artapanus apud Euseb. Præp. Evangel. viii. 28. Compare Clemens. Alex. Strom. v. p. 562. It is curious enough that the constant repetition of the mysterious name of the Deity, Oum, should be the most acceptable act of devotion

among the Indians, among the Jews the most awful and inexpiable impiety.

(2) It is not improbable that they may have taken off their ordinary dress, for the purpose of performing their incantation with greater solemnity.

These superstitions, however, though domiciliated at Ephesus, were foreign; and, perhaps, according to the Roman provincial regulations, unlawful. Yet, even the established religion, at least some of those dependent upon it for their subsistence, began to tremble at the rapid increase of the new faith. A collision now, for the first time, took place with the interests of that numerous class who were directly connected with the support of the reigning Polytheism. The Temple of Ephesus, as one of the wonders of the world, was constantly visited by strangers; a few, perhaps, from religion, many from curiosity or admiration of the unrivalled architecture; at all events, by the greater number of those who were always passing, accidentally, or with mercantile views, through one of the most celebrated marts of the East. There was a common article of trade, a model or shrine of silver representing the temple, which was preserved as a memorial, or, perhaps, as endowed with some sacred and talismanic power. The sale of these works gradually fell off and the artisans, at the instigation of a certain Demetrius, raised a violent popular tumult, and spread the exciting watchword that the worship of Diana was in danger. The whole city rung with the repeated outcries, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” Two of Paul’s companions were seized and dragged into the public theatre, the place where in many cities the public business was transacted. Paul was eager to address the multitude, but was restrained by the prudence of his friends, among whom were some of the most eminent men of the province, the Asiarchs (1). The Jews appear to have been implicated in the insurrection; and, probably, to exculpate themselves, and disclaim all connection with the Christians, they put forward a certain Alexander, a man of eloquence and authority. The appearance of Alexander seems not to have produced the effect that they intended: as a Jew, he was considered hostile to the Polytheistic worship; his voice was drowned by the turbulence, and for two hours nothing could be heard in the assembly but the reiterated clamour, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” The conduct of the magistrates seems to indicate that they were acting against a part of the community, in whose favour the imperial edicts were still in force. Either they did not yet clearly distinguish between the Jews and Christians, or supposed that the latter, as originally Jews, were under the protection of the same rescripts. Expressing the utmost reverence for the established religion of Diana, they recommend moderation; exculpate the accused from the charge of intentional insult, either against the temple or the religion of the city; require that the cause should be heard in a

Demetrius, the maker of silver shrines, A. D. 57.

(1) This office appears to have been a wreck of the ancient federal constitution of the Asiatic cities. The Asiarchs were elective, by certain cities, and represented the general league or confederation. They possessed the supreme sacerdo-

tal authority; regulated and presided in the theatrical exhibitions. Their pontifical character renders it more remarkable that they should have been favourably disposed towards Paul.

legal form; and, finally, urge the danger which the city incurred of being punished for the breach of the public peace by the higher authorities,—the proconsular governor of Asia. The tumult was allayed; but Paul seems to have thought it prudent to withdraw from the excited city, and to pursue his former line of travel into Macedonia and Greece.

From Ephesus, accordingly, we trace his course through Macedonia to Corinth. Great changes had probably taken place in this community. The exiles from Rome, when the first violence of the edict of Claudius had passed away, both Jews and Christians, quietly stole back to their usual residences in the metropolis. In writing his epistle to the Roman Christians from this place, Paul seems to intimate both that the religion was again peaceably and firmly established in Rome (it counted some of the imperial household among its converts); and, likewise, that he was addressing many individuals with whom he was personally acquainted. As then, it is quite clear, from the early history, that he had not himself travelled so far as Italy, Corinth seems the only place where he can have formed these connections.

A. D. 58. His return led him, from fear of his hostile countrymen, back through Macedonia to Troas; thence, taking ship at Assos, he visited the principal island of the Ægean Mitylene, Chios, and Samos; landed at Miletus, where he had an interview with the heads of the Ephesian community; thence, by sea, touching at Coos, Rhodes, and Patara, to Tyre. Few incidents occur during this long voyage: the solemn and affecting parting from the Ephesian Christians, who came to meet him at Miletus, implies a profound sense of the dangers which awaited him on his return to Palestine. The events which occurred during his journey, and his residence in Jerusalem, have been already related. This last collision with his native Judaism, and his imprisonment, occupy between two and three years (1).

A. D. 61. The next place in which the Apostle surveyed the strength, and encountered the hostility of Paganism was in the metropolis of the world. Released from his imprisonment at Cæsarea, the Christian Apostle was sent to answer for his conduct in Jerusalem before the imperial tribunal, to which, as a Roman citizen, he had claimed his right of appeal. His voyage is singularly descriptive of the precarious navigation of the mediterranean at that time; and it is curious that in the wild island of Melita, the Apostle having been looked upon as an atrocious criminal, because a viper had fastened upon his hand; when he shook the reptile off, without having received any injury, was admired as a god. In the barbarous Melita, as in the barbarous Lystra, the belief in gods under the human form had

(1) For the period between the year 58 and 61, see the last chapter.



not yet given place to the incredulous spirit of the age. He arrives at length, at the port in Italy, where voyagers from Syria or Egypt usually disembarked, Puteoly. There appears to have been Christians in that town, who received Paul, and with whom he resided for seven days. Many of the Roman Christians, apprised of his arrival, went out to meet him as far the village of Appii Forum, or a place called the Three Taverns. But it is remarkable that so complete by this time was the separation between the Jewish and Christian communities, that the former had no intelligence of his arrival, and what is more singular, knew nothing whatever of his case (1). Possibly the usual correspondence with Jerusalem had been interrupted at the time of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome, and had not been re-established with its former regularity; or, as is more probable, the persecution of Paul being a party and Sadducaic measure, was neither avowed nor supported by the great body of the nation. Those who had visited, and returned from, Jerusalem, being chiefly of the Pharisaic or more religious party, were either ignorant or imperfectly informed of the extraordinary adventures of Paul in their native city: and two years had elapsed during his confinement at Cæsarea. Though still in form a prisoner, Paul enjoyed almost perfect freedom, and his first step was a general appeal to the whole community of the Jews then resident in Rome. To them he explained the cause of his arrival. It was not uncommon in disputes between two parties in Jerusalem, that both should be summoned or sent at once by the governor, especially if, like Paul, they demanded it as a right, to plead their cause before the imperial courts. More than once the High Priest himself had been reduced to the degrading situation of a criminal before a higher tribunal; and there are several instances in which all the arts of court intrigue were employed to obtain a decision on some question of Jewish politics. Paul, while he acknowledges that his conflict with his countrymen related to his belief in Christ, as the Messiah disclaims all intention of arraigning the ruling authorities for their injustice: he had no charge to advance against the nation. The Jews, in general, seem to have been inclined to hear from so high an authority the real doctrines of the Gospel. They assembled for that purpose at the house in which the Apostle was confined; and, as usual, some were favourably disposed to the Christianity of Paul, others rejected it with the most confirmed obduracy.

But, at this instant, we pass at once from the firm and solid ground of authentic and credible history, upon the quaking and insecure footing of legendary tradition. A few scattered notices of the personal history of Paul may be gathered from the later epistles; but the last fact which we receive from the undoubted autho-

A. D. 63.  
St. Paul  
leaves  
Rome.

(1) Acts, xxviii, 21.

rity of the writer of the Acts is, that two years passed before the Apostle left Rome (1). To what examination he was subjected, in what manner his release was obtained, all is obscure, or rather without one ray of light. But to the success of Paul in Rome; and to the rapid progress of Christianity during these two eventful years, we have gloomy and melancholy evidence. The next year after his departure is darkly noted in the annals of Rome as the era of that fatal fire which enveloped in ruin all the ancient grandeur of the Eternal City;—in those of Christianity, as the epoch of the first heathen persecution. This event throws considerable light on the state of the Christian church at Rome. No secret or very inconsiderable community would have attracted the notice, or satisfied the blood-thirsty cruelty of Nero. The people would not have consented to receive as atoning victims for the dreadful disaster of the great conflagration, nor would the reckless tyranny of the emperor have condescended to select them as sacrificial offerings to appease the popular fury, unless they had been numerous, far above contempt, and already looked upon with a jealous eye. Nor is it less clear, that even to the blind discernment of popular indignation and imperial cruelty, the Christians were by this time distinguished from the Jews. They were no longer a mere sect of the parent nation, but a separate, a marked, and peculiar people, known by their distinctive usages, and incorporating many of Gentile descent into their original Jewish community.

A. D. 64.  
Burning  
of Rome.

Though at first there appears something unaccountable in this proscription of a harmless and unobtrusive sect, against whom the worst charge, at last, was the introduction of a new and peaceful form of worshipping one Deity, a privilege which the Jew had always enjoyed without molestation; yet the process by which the public mind was led to this outburst of fury, and the manner in which it was directed against the Christians, is clearly indicated by the historian (2). After the first consternation and distress, an access of awe-struck superstition seized on the popular mind. Great public calamities can never be referred to obvious or accidental causes. The trembling people had recourse to religious rites, endeavoured to ascertain by what offended deities this dreadful judgment had been inflicted, and sought for victims to appease their yet perhaps unmitigated gods (3). But when superstition has once found out victims, to whose guilt or impiety it may ascribe the divine anger, human revenge mingles itself up

(1) Whatever might be the reason for the abrupt termination of the book of the Acts, which could neither be the death of the author, for he probably survived St. Paul, nor his total separation from him, for he was with him towards the close of his career (2 Tim. iv. 11.), the expression in the last verse but one of the Acts limits the residence of St. Paul in Rome, at that time, to two years.

(2) *Mox petita diis piacula, aditque Sibyllæ libri, ex quibus supplicatum Vulcano et Cereri Proserpinaque, ac propitiata Juno per matronas, primum in Capitolio, deinde apud proximum mare, etc.* Tac. Ann. xv. 44.

(3) *Sed non ope humanâ, non largitionibus principis, aut deum placamentis decedebat infamia, quin jussu incendium crederetur.*

with the relentless determination to propitiate offended Heaven, and contributes still more to blind the judgment and exasperate the passions. The other foreign religions, at which the native deities might take offence, had been long domiciliated in Rome. Christianity was the newest, perhaps was making the most alarming progress : it was no national religion ; it was disclaimed with eager animosity by the Jews, among whom it originated ; its principles and practices were obscure and unintelligible ; and that obscurity the excited imagination of the hostile people might fill up with the darkest and most monstrous forms.

We have sometimes thought it possible that incautious or misinterpreted expressions of the Christians themselves might have attracted the blind resentment of the people. The minds of the Christians were constantly occupied with the terrific images of the final coming of the Lord to judgment in fire ; the conflagration of the world was the expected consummation, which they devoutly supposed to be instantly at hand. When, therefore, they saw the great metropolis of the world, the city of pride, of sensuality, of idolatry, of bloodshed, blazing like a fiery furnace before their eyes,—the Babylon of the West wrapped in one vast sheet of destroying flame,—the more fanatical—the *Jewish* part of the community (1)—may have looked on with something of fierce hope, and eager anticipation ; expressions almost triumphant may have burst from unguarded lips. They may have attributed the ruin to the righteous vengeance of the Lord ; it may have seemed the opening of that kingdom which was to commence with the discomfiture, the desolation, of heathenism, and to conclude with the establishment of the millennial kingdom of Christ. Some of these, in the first instance, apprehended and examined, may have made acknowledgments before a passionate and astonished tribunal, which would lead to the conclusion that, in the hour of general destruction, they had some trust, some security, denied to the rest of mankind ; and this exemption from common misery, if it would not mark them out in some dark manner (2), as the authors of the conflagration, at all events would convict them of that hatred of the human race so often advanced against the Jews.

Inventive cruelty sought out new ways of torturing these victims of popular hatred and imperial injustice. The calm and serene patience with which they were armed by their religion against the most excruciating sufferings, may have irritated still further their ruthless persecutors. The sowing up men in the skins of beasts, and setting dogs to tear them to pieces, may find precedent in the annals

Probable causes which implicated the Christians with this event.

(1) Some deep and permanent cause of hatred against the Christians, it may almost seem, as connected with this disaster, can alone account for the strong expressions of Tacitus, writing so

many years after : — *Sontes et novissima exempla meritos.*

(2) *Haud perinde in crimine incendii quam odio generis humani convicti sunt.*



of human barbarity (1); but the covering them over with a kind of dress smeared with wax, pitch, or other combustible matter, with a stake under the chin, to keep them upright, and then placing them to be slowly consumed, like torches in the public gardens of popular amusement,—this seems to have been an invention of the time; and, from the manner in which it is mentioned by the Roman writers, as the most horrible torture known, appears to have made a profound impression on the general mind. Even a people habituated to gladiatorial shows and to the horrible scenes of wholesale execution which were of daily occurrence during the reigns of Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero, must yet have been in an unusual state of exasperated excitement to endure, or rather to take pleasure, in the sight of these unparalleled barbarities. Thus, the gentle, the peaceful religion of Christ, was welcomed upon earth by new applications of man's inventive faculties, to inflict suffering, and to satiate revenge (2).

The Apostle was, no doubt, absent from Rome at the commencement, and during the whole, of this persecution. His course is dimly descried by the hints scattered through his later epistles. It is probable that he travelled into Spain. The assertion of Irenæus, that he penetrated to the extreme West (3) coincides with his intention of visiting that province declared at an earlier period. As it is difficult to assign to any other part of his life the establishment of Christianity in Crete, it may be permitted to suppose, that from Spain his course lay eastward, not improbably with the design of revisiting Jerusalem. That he entertained this design, there appears some evidence; none, however, that he accomplished it (4). The state of Judæa, in which Roman oppression had now begun, under Albinus, if not under Florus (5), to grow to an intolerable height; the spirit of indignant resistance which was fermenting in the mind

(1) Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis oblecti, laniatu canum interirent; aut crucibus affixi, aut flammandi, atque ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur. Tac. Ann. xv. 54. Juvenal calls this "tunica mollestæ," viii. 235.

tædâ lucebis in illâ  
Qua stantes ardent, qui fixo gutture fumant  
Et laticum mediâ sulcum deducit arenâ.—i. 156.

Illam tunicam alimentis ignium illitam et intexam.—Senec. Epist. xix. It was probably thought appropriate to consume with slow fire the authors of the conflagration.

(2) Gibbon's extraordinary "conjecture" that the Christians in Rome were confounded with the Galileans, the fanatical followers of Judas the Gaulonite, is most improbable. The sect of Judas was not known beyond the precincts of Palestine. The insinuation that the Jews may have escaped the proscription, through the interest of the beautiful Poppea and the favourite Jewish player Aliturus, though not very likely, is more in character with the times.

(3) The visit of St. Paul to Britain, in our opinion, is a fiction of religious national vanity.

It has few or no advocates except English ecclesiastical antiquarians. In fact, the state of the island, in which the precarious sovereignty of Rome was still fiercely contested by the native barbarians, seems to be entirely forgotten. Civilisation had made little progress in Britain till the conquest of Agricola. Up to that time, it was occupied only by the invading legionaries, fully employed in extending and guarding their conquests, and our wild ancestors with their stern Druidical hierarchy. From which class were the Apostle's hearers or converts? My friend Dr. Cardwell, in a recent essay on this subject, concurs with this opinion.

(4) This is inferred from Hebr. xiii. 23. This inference, however, assumes several points. In the first place, that Paul is the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. To this opinion, though by no means certain, we strongly incline. But it does not follow that Paul fulfilled his intention; and even the intention was conditional, and dependent on the speedy arrival of Timothy, which may or may not have taken place.

(5) Florus succeeded Albinus, A. D. 64.

of the people, might either operate to deter or to induce the Apostle to undertake the journey. On the one hand, if the Jews should renew their implacable hostility, the Christians, now having become odious to the Roman government, could expect no protection; the rapacious tyranny of the new rulers would seize every occasion of including the Christian community under the grinding and vexatious system of persecution: and such occasion would be furnished by any tumult in which they might be implicated. On the other hand, the popular mind among the Jews being absorbed by stronger interests, engrossed by passions even more powerful than hatred of Christianity, the Apostle might have entered the city unnoticed, and remained concealed among his Christian friends; particularly as the frequent change in the ruling authorities, and the perpetual deposal of the High Priest, during the long interval of his absence, may have stripped his leading adversaries of their authority.

Be this as it may, there are manifest vestiges of his having visited many cities of Asia Minor—Ephesus, Colossæ (1), Miletus (2), Troas (3); that he passed a winter at Nicopolis, in Epirus (4). From hence he may have descended to Corinth (5), and from Corinth, probable reasons may be assigned for his return to Rome. In all these cities, and, doubtless, in many others, where we have no record of the first promulgation of the religion, the Christians formed regular and organised communities. Constant intercourse seems to have been maintained throughout the whole confederacy. Besides the Apostles, other persons seem to have been constantly travelling about, some entirely devoted to the dissemination of the religion, others uniting it with their own secular pursuits. Onesiphorus (6), it may be supposed, a wealthy merchant, resident at Ephesus, being in Rome at the time of Paul's imprisonment, laboured to alleviate the irksomeness of his confinement. Paul had constantly one, sometimes many, companions in his journeys. Some of these he seems to have established, as Titus, in Crete, to preside over the young communities; others were left behind for a time to superintend the interests of the religion; others, as Luke, the author of the Acts, were in more regular attendance upon him, and appear to have been only occasionally separated by accidental circumstances. But, if we may judge from the authentic records of the New Testament, the whole Christianity of the West emanated from Paul alone. The indefatigable activity of this one man had planted Christian colonies, each of which became the centre of a new moral civilisation, from the borders of Syria, as far as Spain, and to the city of Rome.

Tradition assigns to the last year of Nero the martyrdom both of

A. D. 66.

(1) Philem. 22.

(2) 2 Tim. iv. 20.

(3) 2 Tim. iv. 13. Compare Paley, *Horæ Pau-*  
*linæ*.

(4) Titus, iii. 12.

(5) 2 Tim. iv. 20.

(6) 2 Tim. i. 16. 18.

St. Peter and St. Paul. That of the former rests altogether on unauthoritative testimony ; that of the latter is rendered highly probable, from the authentic record of the second Epistle to Timothy. This letter was written by the author when in custody at Rome (1), apparently under more rigorous confinement than during his first imprisonment ; not looking forward to his release (2), but with steadfast presentiment of his approaching violent death. It contains allusions to his recent journey in Asia Minor and Greece. He had already undergone a first examination (3), and the danger was so great, that he had been deserted by some of his most attached followers, particularly by Demas. If conjecture be admitted, the preparations for the reception of Nero at Corinth, during the celebration of the Isthmian games, may have caused well-grounded apprehensions to the Christian community in that city. Paul might have thought it prudent to withdraw from Corinth, whither his last journey had brought him, and might seize the opportunity of the emperor's absence, to visit and restore the persecuted community at Rome. During the absence of Nero, the government of Rome and of Italy was entrusted to the freed-slave Helius, a fit representative of the absent tyrant. He had full power of life and death, even over the senatorial order. The world, says Dion, was enslaved at once to two autocrats, Helius and Nero. Thus Paul may have found another Nero in the hostile capital ; and the general tradition, that he was put to death, not by order of the emperor, but of the governor of the city, coincides with this state of things.

The fame of St. Peter, from whom she claims the supremacy of the Christian world, has eclipsed that of St. Paul in the Eternal City. The most splendid temple which has been erected by Christian zeal, to rival or surpass the proudest edifices of heathen magnificence, bears the name of that apostle, while that of St. Paul rises in a remote and unwholesome suburb. Studious to avoid, if possible, the treacherous and slippery ground of polemic controversy, we must be permitted to express our surprise that in no part of the authentic scripture occurs the slightest allusion to the personal history of St. Peter, as connected with the western churches. At all events, the conversion of the Gentile world was the acknowledged province of St. Paul. In that partition treaty, in which these two moral invaders divided the yet unconquered world, the more civilised province of Greek and Roman heathenism was assigned to him who was emphatically called the Apostle of the Gentiles, while the Jewish population fell under the particular care of the Galilean Peter. For the operations of the latter, no part of the world, exclusive of Palestine, which seems to have been left to James the

(1) All the names of the church who unite in the salutation, iv. 21., are Roman.

(2) 2 Tim. iv. 5, 6, 7.

(3) 2 Tim. i. 12. 16. Rosenmuller however (in loc.) understands this of the examination during his first trial.



Just, would afford such ample scope for success as Babylonia and the Asiatic provinces, to which the Epistles of Peter are addressed. His own writings distinctly show that he was connected by some intimate tie with these communities; and, as it appears, that Galatia was a stronghold of Judaical Christianity, it is probable that the greater part of those converts were originally Jews or Asiatics, whom Judaism had already prepared for the reception of Christianity. Where Judaism thus widely prevailed, was the appropriate province of the Apostle of the circumcision. While then those, whose severe historical criticism is content with nothing less than contemporary evidence, or, at least, probable inferences from such records, will question, at least, the permanent establishment of Peter in the imperial city, those who admit the authority of tradition will adhere to, and may, indeed, make a strong case in favour of St. Peter's residence (1); or his martyrdom at Rome (2).

The spent wave of the Neronian persecution (3) may have recovered sufficient force to sweep away those who were employed in reconstructing the shattered edifice of Christianity in Rome. The return of an individual, however personally obscure, yet connected with a sect so recently proscribed, both by popular odium and public authority, would scarcely escape the vigilant police of the metropolis. One individual is named, Alexander, the coppersmith,

(1) The authorities are Irenæus, Dionysius of Corinth apud Eusebium, and Epiphanius.

(2) Pearson in his *Opera Posthuma*, Diss. de serie et successione Romæ. Episcop. supposes Peter to have been in Rome. Compare Townson on the Gospels. Diss. 5. sect. v. Barrow, (Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy,) will not "avow" the opinion of those who argue him never to have been at Rome, vol. vi. p. 139. Oxford ed. 1818. Lightfoot, whose profound knowledge of every thing relating to the Jewish nation entitles his opinions to respect, observes, in confirmation of his assertion, that Peter lived and died in Chaldeæ,—*quam absurdum est statuere, ministrum præcipuum circumcisionis sedem suam figere in metropoli preputiatorum, Romæ*. Lightfoot's Works, 8vo. edit. x. 392.

If, then, with Barrow I may "bear some civil respect to ancient testimonies and traditions" (loc. cit.), the strong bias of my own mind is to the following solution of this problem. With Lightfoot, I believe, that Babylonia was the scene of St. Peter's labours. But I am likewise confident that in Rome, as in Corinth, there were two communities,—a Petrine and a Pauline,—a Judaizing and an Hellenising church. The origin of the two communities in the doctrines attributed to the two apostles, may have been gradually transmuted into the foundation first of each community, then generally of the church of Rome, by the two apostles. All the difficulties in the arrangement of the succession to the episcopal see of Rome vanish, if we suppose two cotemporary lines. Here, as elsewhere, the Judaizing church either expired or was absorbed in the Pauline community.

The passage in the Corinthians by no means necessarily implies the personal presence of Peter in that city. There was a party there, no doubt a judaizing one, which professed to preach

the pure doctrine of "Cephas," in opposition to that of Paul, and who called themselves, therefore, "of Cephas."

Dum primos ecclesiæ Romanæ fundatores querro occurrit illud. Acts, ii. 10. *Οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι Ἰουδαῖοι τε καὶ προσήλυτοι*. Lightfoot's Works, 8vo. edit. x. 392.

(3) As to the extent of the Neronian persecution, whether it was general, or confined to the city of Rome, I agree with Mosheim that only one valid argument is usually advanced on either side. On the one hand, that of Dodwell, that the Christians being persecuted not on account of their religion, but on the charge of incendiarism, that charge could not have been brought against those who lived beyond the precincts of the city. Though as to this point, it is to be feared that many an honest Protestant would have considered the real crime of the gunpowder plot, or the imputed guilt of the fire of London, ample justification for a general persecution of the Roman Catholics. On the other hand, is alleged the authority of Tertullian, who refers, in a public apology to the laws of Nero and Domitian against the Christians, an expression too distinct to pass for rhetoric, even in that passionate writer, though he may have magnified temporary edicts into general laws. The Spanish inscription not only wants confirmation, but even evidence that it ever existed. There is however a point of some importance in favour of the first opinion. Paul appears to have travelled about through a great part of the Roman empire during this interval, yet we have no intimation of his being in more than ordinary personal danger. It was not till his return to Rome that he was again apprehended, and at length suffered martyrdom.

Martyr-  
dom of  
Paul.

whose seemingly personal hostility had caused or increased the danger in which Paul considered himself during his second imprisonment. He may have been the original informer, who betrayed his being in Rome, or his intimate alliance with the Christians; or, he may have appeared as evidence against him during his examination. Though there may have been no existing law, or imperial rescript against the Christians; and Paul, having been absent from Rome at the time, could not be implicated in the charge of incendiarism; yet the representative of Nero, if faithfully described by Dion Cassius (1), would pay little regard to the forms of criminal justice, and would have no scruple in ordering the summary execution of an obscure individual, since it does not appear, that in exercising the jurisdiction of præfect of the city, he treated the lives of knights or of senators with more respect. There is, therefore, no improbability that the Christian church in Rome may have faithfully preserved the fact of Paul's execution, and even cherished in their pious memory the spot on the Ostian road, watered by the blood of the Apostle. As a Roman citizen, Paul is said to have been beheaded, instead of being suspended to a cross, or exposed to any of those horrid tortures invented for the Christians; and so far the modest probability of the relation may confirm rather than impeach its truth. The other circumstances—his conversion of the soldiers who carried him to execution, and of the executioner himself—bear too much the air of religious romance. Though, indeed, the Roman Christians had not the same interest in inventing or embellishing the martyrdom of Paul, as that of the other great Apostle from whom they derive their supremacy.

## CHAPTER IV.

CHRISTIANITY TO THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST CENTURY.—CONSTITUTION OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

Great re-  
volutions  
slow and  
gradual.

THE changes in the moral are usually wrought as imperceptibly as those in the physical world. Had any wise man, either convinced of the divine origin of Christianity, or even contemplating with philosophical sagacity the essential nature of the new religion, and the existing state of the human mind, ventured to predict, that from the ashes of these obscure men would arise a moral sove-

(1) Τοὺς μέντοι ἐν τῇ Ρώμῃ καὶ τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ πάντας Ἠλίω τινὶ Καισαρείῳ ἐκδόντους παρέδωκε. Πάντα γὰρ ἀπλῶς ἐπιστέπραπτο, ὥστε καὶ δημεύειν, καὶ συγασθεύειν, καὶ αποκτινύναι (καὶ πρὶν δολῶσαι τῷ Νέρωνι) καὶ ἰδιώτας ὁμοίως, καὶ ἰαπείας καὶ βουλευτάς. Οὕτω μὲν δὴ τότε ἡ τῶν Ρωμαίων ἀρχὴ δύο αὐτοκράτορσιν ἅμα ἑδοῦλε, Νέρωνι καὶ Ἠλίῳ. Οὐδὲ ἔχω εἰπεῖν ὁπότερος αὐτῶν χεῖραν ἦν. Dion. Cassius, (or Xiphilin) lxxiii. c. 12.

reignly more extensive and lasting than that of the Cæsars; that buildings more splendid than any which adorned the new marble city, now rising from the ruins of the conflagration, would be dedicated to their name, and maintain their reverence for an incalculably longer period; such vaticinations would have met the fate inseparable from the wisdom which outstrips its age, would have been scorned by cotemporary pride, and only admired after their accomplishment, by late posterity. The slight and contemptuous notice excited by Christianity during the first century of its promulgation is in strict accordance with this ordinary development of the great and lasting revolutions in human affairs. The moral world has sometimes, indeed, its volcanic explosions, which suddenly and violently convulse and reform the order of things; but its more enduring changes are in general produced by the slow and silent workings of opinions, remotely prepared and gradually expanding to their mature and irresistible influence. In default therefore of real information, as to the secret but simultaneous progress of Christianity in so many quarters, and among all ranks, we are left to speculate on the influence of the passing events of the time, and of the changes in the public mind, whether favourable or prejudicial to the cause of Christianity, catching only faint and uncertain gleams of its peculiar history through the confused and rapidly changing course of public affairs.

The Imperial history from the first promulgation of Christianity down to the accession of Constantine, divides itself into four distinct, but unequal periods. More than thirty years are occupied by the line of the first Cæsars, rather less by the conflicts which followed the death of Nero, and the government of the Flavian dynasty. The first years of Trajan, who ascended the Imperial throne. A. D. 98., nearly synchronize with the opening of the second century of Christianity; and that splendid period of internal peace and advancing civilisation, of wealth, and of prosperity, which has been described as the happiest in the annals of mankind, extends over the first eighty years of that century (1). Down to the accession of Constantine, nearly at the commencement of the fourth century, the empire became, like the great monarchies of the East, the prize of successful ambition and enterprise: almost every change of ruler is a change of dynasty; and already the borders of the empire have ceased to be respected by the menacing, the conquering Barbarians.

It is remarkable how singularly the political character of each period was calculated to advance the growth of Christianity.

During the first of these periods the government, though it still held in respect the old republican institutions, was, if not in form,

Imperial  
history di-  
vided into  
four pe-  
riods.

First pe-  
riod to the  
death of  
Nero.

(1) Among the writers who have discussed this question may be consulted Hegewisch, whose work has been recently translated by M. Solvet, under the title of *Essai sur l'Epoque de l'Histoire Romaine la plus heureuse pour le Genre Humain*. Paris, 1834.



in its administration purely despotic. The state centered in the person of the Emperor. This kind of hereditary autocracy is essentially selfish : it is content with averting or punishing plots against the person, or detecting and crushing conspiracies against the power, of the existing monarch. To those more remote or secret changes, which are working in the depths of society, eventually perhaps threatening the existence of the monarchy, or the stability of all the social relations, it is blind or indifferent (1). It has neither sagacity to discern, intelligence to comprehend, nor even the disinterested zeal for the perpetuation of its own despotism, to counteract such distant and contingent dangers. Of all innovations it is, in general, sensitively jealous ; but they must be palpable and manifest, and directly clashing with the passions or exciting the fears of the sovereign. Even these are met by temporary measures. When an outcry was raised against the Egyptian religion as dangerous to public morality, an edict commanded the expulsion of its votaries from the city. When the superstition of the Emperor shuddered at the predictions of the mathematicians, the whole fraternity fell under the same interdict. When the public peace was disturbed by the dissensions among the Jewish population of Rome, the summary sentence of Claudius visited both Jews and Christians with the same indifferent severity. So the Neronian persecution was an accident arising out of the fire at Rome, no part of a systematic political plan for the suppression of foreign religions. It might have fallen on any other sect or body of men, who might have been designated as victims to appease the popular resentment. The provincial administrations would be actuated by the same principles as the central government, and be alike indifferent to the quiet progress of opinions, however dangerous to the existing order of things. Unless some breach of the public peace demanded their interference, they would rarely put forth their power ; and content with the maintenance of order, the regular collection of the revenue, the more rapacious with the punctual payment of their own exactions, the more enlightened with the improvement and embellishment of the cities under their charge, they would look on the rise and propagation of a new religion with no more concern than that of a new philosophic sect, particularly in the eastern part of the empire, where the religions were in general more foreign to the character of the Greek or Roman Polytheism. The popular feeling during this first period would only under peculiar circumstances outstrip the activity of the government. Accustomed to the separate worship of the Jews, to them Christianity appeared at first only as a modification of that belief. Local jealousies or personal animosities might

(1) *Sævi proximis ingruunt.* In this one sometimes been comparatively unoppressed under the most sanguinary tyranny.  
 pregnant sentence of Tacitus is explained the political secret, that the mass of the people have

in different places excite a more active hostility ; in Rome it is evident that the people were only worked up to find inhuman delight in the sufferings of the Christians, by the misrepresentations of the government, by superstitious solicitude to find some victims to appease the angry Gods, and that strange consolation of human misery, the delight of wreaking vengeance on whomsoever it can possibly implicate as the cause of the calamity.

During the whole then of this first period, to the death of Nero, both the primitive obscurity of Christianity, and the transient importance it assumed, as a dangerous enemy of the people of Rome, and subsequently as the guiltless victim of popular vengeance, would tend to its eventual progress. Its own innate activity, with all the force which it carried with it, both in its internal and external impulse, would propagate it extensively in the inferior and middle classes of society ; while, though the great mass of the higher orders would still remain unacquainted with its real nature, and with its relation to its parent Judaism, it was quite enough before the public attention to awaken the curiosity of the more inquiring, and to excite the interest of those who were seriously concerned in the moral advancement of mankind. In many quarters, it is far from impossible that the strong revulsion of the public mind against Nero, after his death, may have extended some commiseration towards his innocent victims (1) : that the Christians were acquitted by the popular feeling of any real connection with the fire at Rome, appears evident from Tacitus, who retreats into vague expressions of general scorn and animosity (2). At all events the persecution must have had the effect of raising the importance of Christianity, so as to force it upon the notice of many, who might otherwise have been ignorant of its existence : the new and peculiar fortitude with which the sufferers endured their unprecedented trials, would strongly recommend it to those who were dissatisfied with the moral power of their old religion ; while on the other hand it was yet too feeble and obscure to provoke a systematic plan for its suppression.

During the second period of the first century, from A. D. 68 to 98, the date of the accession of Trajan, the larger portion was occupied by the reign of Domitian, a tyrant, in whom the successors of Augustus might appear to revive, both in the monstrous vices of his personal character, and of his government. Of the Flavian dynasty, the father alone, Vespasian, from the comprehensive vigour of his mind, perhaps from his knowledge of the Jewish character and religion, obtained during his residence in the East, was likely to estimate the bearings and future prospects of Christianity. But the

Second  
period to  
the acces-  
sion of  
Trajan.

(1) This was the case even in Rome. Unde quanquam aduersus fontes et novissima exempla meritos, miseratio oriebatur, tanquam non

utilitate publica, sed in sevitiam unius absmerentur. Tac. An. xv. 44.

(2) Odio humani generis convicti.

total subjugation of Judæa, and the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, having reduced the religious parents of the Christians to so low a state, their nation and consequently their religion, being, according to the ordinary course of events, likely to mingle up and become absorbed in the general population of the Roman empire, Christianity, it might reasonably be supposed, would scarcely survive its original stock, and might be safely left to burn out by the same gradual process of extinction. Besides this, the strong mind of Vespasian was fully occupied by the restoration of order in the capital and in the provinces, and in fixing on a firm basis the yet unsettled authority of the Flavian dynasty. A more formidable, because more immediate danger, threatened the existing order of things. The awful genius of Roman liberty had entered into an alliance with the higher philosophy of the time. Republican stoicism, brooding in the noblest minds of Rome, looked back with vain though passionate regret, to the free institutions of their ancestors, and demanded the old liberty of action. It was this dangerous movement, not the new and humble religion, which calmly acquiesced in all political changes, and contented itself with liberty of thought and opinion, which put to the test the prudence and moderation of the emperor Vespasian. It was the spirit of Cato, not of Christ, which he found it necessary to control. The enemy before whom he trembled was the patriot Trasea, not the Apostle St. John, who was silently winning over Ephesus to the new faith. The edict of expulsion from Rome fell not on the worshippers of foreign religions, but on the philosophers, a comprehensive term, but which was probably limited to those whose opinions were considered dangerous to the Imperial authority (1).

Stoic philosophers.

It was only with the new fiscal regulations of the rapacious and parsimonious Vespasian, that the Christians were accidentally implicated. The Emperor continued to levy the capitation tax, which had been willingly and proudly paid by the Jews throughout the empire for the maintenance of their own temple at Jerusalem, for the restoration of the idolatrous fane of the Capitoline Jupiter, which had been destroyed in the civil contests. The Jew submitted with sullen reluctance to this insulting exaction; but even the hope of escaping it would not incline him to disguise or dissemble his faith. But the Judaizing Christian, and even the Christian of Jewish descent, who had entirely thrown off his religion, yet was marked by the indelible sign of his race, was placed in a singularly perplexing position (2). The rapacious publican, who farmed the tax, was not likely to draw any true distinction among those whose features, connexions, name, and notorious descent, still designated

Temple tax.

(1) Tacit. Hist. iv. 4—9. Dion Cassius, lxxvi. lib. lxxvi. p. 1082. Suetonius in Dom. v. 12. 13. Suetonius, Vespas. 15. Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs. Vespasian. Art. xv. Martial, vii. 14. Basnage, Hist. des Juifs. vol. vii. ch. xi. p. 304.

(2) Dion Cassius, edit. Reimar, with his notes,



them as liable to the tax : his coarser mind would consider the profession of Christianity as a subterfuge to escape a vexatious impost. But to the Jewish Christian of St. Paul's opinions, the unresisted payment of the burthen, however insignificant, and to which he was not bound, either by the letter or the spirit of the edict, was an acknowledgment of his unconverted Judaism, of his being still under the law, as well as an indirect contribution to the maintenance of heathenism. It is difficult to suppose that those who were brought before the public tribunal, as claiming an exemption from the tax, and exposed to the most indecent examination of their Jewish descent, were any other than this class of Judaizing Christians.

In other respects, the connexion of the Christians with the Jews could not but affect their place in that indiscriminating public estimation, which still, in general, notwithstanding the Neronian persecution, confounded them together. The Jewish war appears to have made a great alteration both in the condition of the race of Israel, and in the popular sentiment towards them. From aversion as a sullen and unsocial, they were now looked upon with hatred and contempt, as a fierce, a desperate, and an enslaved race. Some of the higher orders, Agrippa and Josephus the historian, maintained a respectable, and even an eminent rank at Rome ; but the provinces were overrun by swarms of Jewish slaves, or miserable fugitives, reduced by necessity to the meanest occupations, and lowering their minds to their sordid and beggarly condition. As then to some of the Romans the Christian assertion of religious freedom would seem closely allied with the Jewish attempt to obtain civil independence, they might appear, especially to those in authority, to have inherited the intractable and insubordinate spirit of their religious forefathers ; so, on the other hand, in some places, the Christian might be dragged down, in the popular apprehension, to the level of the fallen and outcast Jew. Thus, while Christianity in fact was becoming more and more alienated from Judaism, and even assuming the most hostile position, the Roman rulers would be the last to discern the widening breach, or to discriminate between that religious confederacy which was destined to absorb within it all the subjects of the Roman empire, and that race which was to remain in its social isolation, neither blended into the general mass of mankind, nor admitting any other within its insuperable pale. If the singular story related by Hegesippus (1) concerning the family of our Lord deserves credit, even the descendants of his house were endangered by their yet unbroken connection with the Jewish race. Domitian is said to have issued an edict for the extermination of the whole house of David, in order to annihilate for ever the hope of

Change in  
the condi-  
tion and  
estimation  
of the Jews  
after the  
war.

The de-  
scendants  
of the bre-  
thren of  
our Lord  
brought  
before the  
tribunal.

(1) Eusebius, iii. 20.

the Messiah, which still brooded with dangerous excitement in the Jewish mind. The grandsons of St. Jude, "the brother of our Lord," were denounced by certain heretics as belonging to the proscribed family, and brought before the tribunal of the Emperor, or, more probably, that of the procurator of Judæa (1). They acknowledged their descent from the royal race, and their relationship to the Messiah; but in Christian language they asserted, that the kingdom which they expected was purely spiritual and angelic, and only to commence at the end of the world, after the return to judgment. Their poverty, rather than their renunciation of all temporal views, was their security. They were peasants, whose hands were hardened with toil, and whose whole property was a farm of about twenty-four English acres, and of the value of 9000 drachmes, or about 300 pounds sterling. This they cultivated by their own labour, and regularly paid the appointed tribute. They were released as too humble and too harmless to be dangerous to the Roman authority, and Domitian, according to the singularly inconsistent account, proceeded to annul his edict of persecution against the Christians. Like all the stories which rest on the sole authority of Hegesippus, this has a very fabulous air. At no period were the hopes of the Messiah, entertained by the Jews, so little likely to awaken the jealousy of the Emperor, as in the reign of Domitian. The Jewish mind was still stunned, as it were, by the recent blow: the whole land was in a state of iron subjection. Nor was it till the latter part of the reign of Trajan, and that of Hadrian, that they rallied for their last desperate and conclusive struggle for independence. Nor, however indistinct the line of demarcation between the Jews and the Christians, is it easy to trace the connection between the stern precaution for the preservation of the peace of the Eastern world and the stability of the Empire against any enthusiastic aspirant after an universal sovereignty, with what is sometimes called the second great persecution of Christianity; for the exterminating edict was aimed at a single family, and at the extinction of a purely Jewish tenet. Though it may be admitted that, even yet, the immediate return of the Messiah to reign on earth was dominant among most of the Jewish Christians of Palestine. Even if true, this edict was rather the hasty and violent expedient of an arbitrary sovereign, trembling for his personal security, and watchful to avert danger from his throne, than a profound and vigorous policy, which aimed at the suppression of a new religion, declaredly hostile, and threatening the existence of the established Polytheism.

Christianity, however, appears to have forced itself upon the knowledge and the fears of Domitian in a more unexpected quarter,—the bosom of his own family (2). Of his two cousins german,

(1) Gibbon thus modifies the story to which he appears to give some credit.

(2) Suetonius, in Domit. c. 15. Dion. Cassius, lxxvii. 14. Eusebius, iii. 18.

the sons of Flavius Sabinus, the one fell an early victim to his jealous apprehensions. The other, Flavius Clemens, is described by the epigrammatic biographer of the Cæsars, as a man of the most contemptible indolence of character. His peaceful kinsman, instead of exciting the fears, enjoyed, for some time, the favour, of Domitian. He received in marriage Domitilla, the niece of the Emperor, his children were adopted as heirs to the throne, Clemens himself obtained the consulship. On a sudden these harmless kinsmen became dangerous conspirators; they were arraigned on the unprecedented charge of Atheism and Jewish manners; the husband, Clemens, was put to death; the wife, Domitilla, banished to the desert island, either of Pontia, or Pandataria. The crime of Atheism was afterwards the common popular charge against the Christians; the charge to which, in all ages, those are exposed who are superior to the vulgar notion of the Deity. But it was a charge never advanced against Judaism; coupled, therefore, with that of Jewish manners, it is unintelligible, unless it refers to Christianity. Nor is it improbable that the contemptible want of energy, ascribed by Suetonius to Flavius Clemens, might be that unambitious superiority to the world which characterised the early Christian. Clemens had seen his brother cut off by the sudden and capricious fears of the tyrant; and his repugnance to enter on the same dangerous public career, in pursuit of honours which he despised, if it had assumed the lofty language of philosophy, might have commanded the admiration of his cotemporaries; but connected with a new religion, of which the sublimer notions and principles were altogether incomprehensible, only exposed him to their more contemptuous scorn. Neither in his case was it the peril apprehended from the progress of the religion, but the dangerous position of the individuals professing the religion, so near to the throne, which was fatal to Clemens and Domitilla. It was the pretext, not the cause, of their punishment; and the first act of the reign of Nerva was the reversal of these sentences by the authority of the senate: the exiles were recalled, and an act, prohibiting all accusations of Jewish manners (1), seems to have been intended as a peace-offering for the execution of Clemens, and for the especial protection of the Christians.

But Christian history cannot pass over another incident assigned to the reign of Domitian, since it relates to the death of St. John the Apostle. Christian gratitude and reverence soon began to be discontented with the silence of the authentic writings as to the fate of the twelve chosen companions of Christ. It began first with some modest respect for truth, but soon with bold defiance of probability to brighten their obscure course, till each might be traced by the blaze of miracle into remote regions of the world, where it is clear,

Flavius  
Clemens.

Legends  
of the mis-  
sions of  
the Apo-  
stles into  
different  
countries.

(1) Dion Cassius, lxxviii. 4.



that if they had penetrated, no record of their existence was likely to survive (1). These religious invaders, according to the later Christian romance, made a regular partition of the world, and assigned to each the conquest of his particular province. Thrace, Scythia, Spain, Britain, Ethiopia, the extreme parts of Africa, India, the name of which mysterious region was sometimes assigned to the southern coast of Arabia, had each their Apostle, whose spiritual triumphs and cruel martyrdom were vividly portrayed and gradually amplified by the fertile invention of the Greek and Syrian historians of the early church. Even the history of St. John, whose later days were chiefly passed in the populous and commercial city of Ephesus, has not escaped. Yet legend has delighted in harmonising its tone with the character of the beloved disciple, drawn in the Gospel, and illustrated in his own writings. Even if purely imaginary, these stories show that another spirit was working in the mind of man. While then we would reject, as the offspring of a more angry and controversial age, the story of his flying in fear and indignation from a bath polluted by the presence of the heretic Cerinthus, we might admit the pleasing tradition that when he grew so feeble from age as to be unable to utter any long discourse, his last, if we may borrow the expression, his cyanean voice, dwelt on a brief exhortation to mutual charity (2). His whole sermon consisted in these words: "Little children, love one another;" and when his audience remonstrated at the wearisome iteration of the same words, he declared that in these words was contained the whole substance of Christianity. The deportation of the Apostle to the wild island of Patmos, where general tradition places his writing the book of Revelations, is by no means improbable, if we suppose it to have taken place under the authority of the proconsul of Asia, on account of some local disturbance in Ephesus, and, notwithstanding the authority of Tertullian, reject the trial before Domitian at Rome, and the plunging him into a cauldron of boiling oil, from which he came forth unhurt (3). Such are the few vestiges of the progress of Christianity which we dimly trace in the obscurity of the latter part of the first century. During this period, however, took place the regular formation of the young Christian republics, in all the more considerable cities of the Empire. The primitive constitution of these churches is a subject which it is impossible to decline, though few points in Christian history rest on more dubious and imperfect, in general on inferential evidence, yet few have been contested with greater pertinacity.

The whole of Christianity, when it emerges out of the obscurity

Death of  
St. John.

Constitu-  
tion of  
Christian  
churches.

(1) Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. 1. The tradition is here in its simpler and clearly more genuine form.

(2) Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. 22.

(3) Ubi (in Româ) Apostolus Johannes,

postea quam in oleum igneum demersus, nihil passus est. Mosheim suspects that in this passage of Tertullian a metaphor has been converted into a fact. Mosheim, de Reb. Christ. ante Constant. p. 114.

of the first century, appears uniformly governed by certain superiors of each community, called bishops. But the origin and extent of this superiority, and the manner in which the bishop assumed a distinct authority from the inferior presbyters, is among those difficult questions of Christian history which, since the Reformation, has been more and more darkened by those fatal enemies to candid and dispassionate inquiry, prejudice and interest. The earliest Christian communities appear to have been ruled and represented, in the absence of the Apostle who was their first founder, by their elders, who are likewise called bishops, or overseers of the churches. These presbyter bishops and the deacons are the only two orders which we discover at first in the church of Ephesus, at Philippi, and perhaps in Crete (1). On the other hand, at a very early period, one religious functionary, superior to the rest, appears to have been almost universally recognised: at least, it is difficult to understand how, in so short a time, among communities, though not entirely disconnected, yet scattered over the whole Roman world, a scheme of government popular, or rather aristocratical, should become, even in form, monarchical. Neither the times nor the circumstances of the infant church, nor the primitive spirit of the religion, appear to favour a general, a systematic, and an unauthorised usurpation of power on the part of the supreme religious functionary (2). Yet the change has already taken place within the Apostolic times. The church of Ephesus, which in the Acts is represented by its elders, in the Revelations (3) is represented by its angel or bishop. We may, perhaps, arrive at a more clear and intelligible view of this subject, by endeavouring to trace the origin and development of the Christian communities.

The Christian church was almost universally formed by a secession from a Jewish synagogue. Some synagogues may have become

Christian churches  
formed  
from, and  
on the model of the  
synagogue.

(1) Acts, xx. 17., compared with 28. Philip. i. 1. Titus, i. 5—7.

(2) The most plausible way of accounting for this total revolution is by supposing that the affairs of each community or church were governed by a college of presbyters, one of whom necessarily presided at their meetings, and gradually assumed and was recognised as possessing a superior function and authority. In expressing my dissatisfaction with a theory adopted by Mosheim, by Gibbon, by Neander, and by most of the learned foreign writers, I have scrutinised my own motives with the utmost suspicion, and can only declare that I believe myself actuated only by the calm and candid desire of truth. But the universal and almost simultaneous elevation of the bishop, under such circumstances, in every part of the world (though it must be admitted that he was for a long time assisted by the presbyters in the discharge of his office), appears to me an insuperable objection to this hypothesis. The later the date which is assumed for the general establishment of the episcopal authority, the less likely was it to be general. It was only during the first

period of undivided unity that such an usurpation, for so it must have been according to this theory, could have been universally acquiesced in without resistance. All presbyters, according to this view, with one consent, gave up or allowed themselves to be deprived of their co-ordinate and coequal dignity. The farther we advance in Christian history, the more we discover the common motives of human nature at work. In this case alone are we to suppose them without influence? Yet we discover no struggle, no resistance, no controversy. The uninterrupted line of bishops is traced by the ecclesiastical historian up to the Apostles; but no murmur of remonstrance against this usurpation has transpired; no schism, no breach of Christian unity followed upon this momentous innovation. Nor does any such change appear to have taken place in the office of elder in the Jewish communities: the rabbinical teachers took the form of a regular hierarchy, their patriarch grew up into a kind of pope, but *episcopal* authority never took root in the synagogue.

(3) Chap. ii. 1.

altogether Christian ; but, in general, a certain part of an existing community of Jews and Gentile proselytes incorporated themselves into a new society, and met for the purpose of divine worship in some private chamber,—sometimes, perhaps, in a public place, as rather later, during the times of persecution, in a cemetery. The first of these may have answered to a synagogue, the latter to an unwallled proseucha. The model of the ancient community would naturally, as far as circumstances might admit, become that of the new. But in their primary constitution there was an essential point of difference. The Jews were a civil as well as a religious, the Christians exclusively a religious, community. Every where that the Jews were settled, they were the colony of a nation, they were held together almost by a kindred, as well as by a religious, bond of union. The governors, therefore, of the community, the Zakinim or Elders, the Parnasim or Pastors ( if this be an early appellation ), were by no means necessarily religious functionaries (1). Another kind of influence, besides that of piety, age, worldly experience, wealth, would obtain the chief and ruling power in the society. Their government neither rested on, nor required, spiritual authority. Their grave example would enforce the general observance, their censure repress any flagrant departure from the law : they might be consulted on any difficult or unusual point of practice ; but it was not till the new rabbinical priesthood was established, and the Mischna and the Talmud universally received as the national code, that the foreign Jews fell under what may be considered sacerdotal dominion. At this time, the synagogue itself was only supplementary to the great national religious ceremonial of the Temple. The Levitical race claimed no peculiar sanctity, at least it discharged no priestly office, beyond the bounds of the Holy Land, or the precincts of the Temple ; nor was an authorised instructor of the people necessary to the service of the synagogue. It was an assembly for the purpose of worship, not of teaching. The instructor of the people, the copy of the law, lay in the ark at the east end of the building ; it was brought forth with solemn reverence, and an appointed portion read during the service. But oral instruction, though it might sometimes be delivered, was no *necessary* part of the ceremonial. Any one, it should seem, who considered himself qualified, and obtained permission from the archisynagogi, the governors of the community, who exercised a sort of presidency in the synagogue, might address the assembly. It was in this character that the Christian Apostle usually began to announce his religion. But neither the chazan, or angel (2) of the synagogue

Essential  
difference  
between  
the church  
and syna-  
gogue.

(1) In some places, the Jews seem to have been ruled by an Ethnarch, recognised by the Roman civil authorities. Strabo, quoted by Josephus, Antiq. xiv. 12., speaks of the Ethnarch in Alexandria. Josephus mentions their Archon or

chief, in Antioch. The more common constitution seems to have been the *γεραιοι* and *δυναται*, — the elders or authorities.

(2) The angel here seems to bear its lower meaning—a messenger or minister.



(which was a purely ministerial, comparatively a servile, office), nor the heads of the assembly, possessed any peculiar privilege, or were endowed with any official function as teachers (1) of the people. Many of the more remote synagogues can rarely have been honoured by the presence of the "Wise Men," as they were afterwards called,—the lawyers of this period. The Jewish religion was, at this time, entirely ceremonial; it did not necessarily demand exposition; its form was moulded into the habits of the people; and till disturbed by the invasion of Christianity, or among very flourishing communities, where it assumed a more intellectual tone, and extended itself by the proselytism of the Gentiles, it was content to rest in that form (2). In the great days of Jewish intellectual activity, the adjacent law school, usually inseparable from the synagogue, might rather be considered the place of religious instruction. This was a kind of chapter-house or court of ecclesiastical, with the Jews identical with their national, law. Here knotty points were publicly debated; and "the Wise," or the more distinguished of the lawyers or interpreters of the law, as the rabbinical hierarchy of a later period, established their character for sagacious discernment of the meaning and intimate acquaintance with the whole body of the law.

Thus, then, the model upon which the church might be expected to form itself, may be called purely aristocratical. The process by which it passed into the monarchical form, however limited the supreme power of the individual, may be traced to the existence of a monarchical principle anterior to their religious oligarchy, and which distinguished the Christian church in its first origin from the Jewish synagogue. The Christians from the first were a purely religious community; this was their primary bond of union; they had no national law which held them together as a separate people. Their civil union was a subordinate effect, arising out of their incorporation as a spiritual body. The submission of their temporal concerns to the adjudication of their own community was a consequence of their respect for the superior justice and wisdom which sprung from their religious principles, and an aversion from the litigious spirit engendered by the complicated system of Roman jurisprudence (3). In their origin they were almost universally a community, formed, as it were, round an individual. The Apostle, or primitive teacher, was installed at once in the office of chief religious functionary; and the chief religious functionary is the natural head

Christian church formed round an individual.

(1) Vitringa labours to prove the point, that the chief of the synagogue exercised an office of this kind, but in my opinion without success. It appears to have been a regular part of the Essene service, a distinction which Vitringa has neglected to observe. *De Syn. Vet.* l. iii. c. 6, 7.

(2) The reading of the law, prayers, and psalms, were the ceremonial of the synagogue.

Probably the greater part of their proselytism took place in private, though, as we know from Horace, the Jewish synagogue was even in Rome a place of resort to the curious, the speculative, and the idle.

(3) The Apostle enjoined this secession from the ordinary courts of justice, *1 Cor.* vi. 1—8.

of a purely religious community. Oral instruction, as it was the first, so it must have continued to be the living, conservative, and expansive principle of the community (1). It was, anterior to the existence of any book, the inspired record and supreme authority of the faith. As long as this teacher remained in the city, or as often as he returned, he would be recognised as the legitimate head of the society. But not only the Apostle, in general the primitive teacher likewise, was a missionary, travelling incessantly into distant regions for the general dissemination of Christianity, rather than residing in one spot to organise a local community (2). In his absence, the government, and even the instruction, of the community devolved upon the senate of Elders, yet there was still a recognised supremacy in the founder of the church (3). The wider, however, the dissemination of Christianity, the more rare, and at longer intervals, the presence of the Apostle. An appeal to his authority, by letter, became more precarious and interrupted; while, at the same time, in many communities, the necessity for his interposition became more frequent and manifest (4); and in the common order of nature, even independent of the danger of persecution, the primitive founder, the legitimate head of the community, would vacate his place by death. That the Apostle should appoint some distinguished individual as the delegate, the representative, the successor, to his authority, as primary instructor of the community; invest him in an episcopacy of overseership, superior to that of the co-ordinate body of Elders, is, in itself, by no means improbable; it harmonises with the period in which we discover, in the Sacred Writings, this change in the form of the permanent government of the different bodies; accounts most easily for the general submission to the authority of one religious chief magistrate, so unsatisfactorily explained by the accidental pre-eminence of the president of a college of co-equal presbyters; and is confirmed by general tradition,

(1) For some time, indeed, as in the Jewish synagogue, what was called the gift of prophecy seems to have been more general; any individual who professed to speak under the direct impulse of the Holy Spirit was heard with attentive reverence. But it may be questioned whether this, and the display of the other *χαρίσματα* recounted by the Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 4—10., were more than subsidiary to the regular and systematic teaching of the apostolic founder of the community. The question is not whether each member was not at liberty to contribute by any faculty which had been bestowed on him by God, to the general edification; but whether, above and anterior to all this, there was not some recognised parent of each church, who was treated with paternal deference, and exercised, when present, paternal authority.

(2) Yet we have an account of a residence even of St. Paul of eighteen months at Corinth, of two years at Ephesus, and he was two years during his first imprisonment at Rome. Acts, xviii. 11.; xix. 10.; xxviii. 30.

(3) St. Paul considered himself invested with

the superintendence of all the churches which he had planted. 2 Cor. xi. 28.

(4) St. Jerome, quoted by Hooker (Eccles. Polity, b. vii. vol. iii. p. 130.), assigns the origin of episcopacy to the dissensions in the church, which required a stronger coercive authority. "Till through instinct of the devil, there grew in the church factions, and among the people it began to be professed, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, churches were governed by the common advice of presbyters: but when every one began to reckon those who he had baptized his own, and not Christ's, it was decreed in the whole world that one chosen out of the presbyters should be placed above the rest, to whom all care of the church should belong, and so all seeds of schism be removed."

The government of the church seems to have been considered a subordinate function. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers: after that, miracles, the gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues, 1 Cor. xii. 28.

which has ever, in strict unison with every other part of Christian history, preserved the names of many successors of the Apostles, the first bishops in most of the larger cities in which Christianity was first established. But the authority of the bishop was that of influence, rather than of power. After the first nomination by the Apostle (if such nomination, as we suppose, generally took place), his successor was elective by that kind of acclamation which raised at once the individual most eminent for his piety and virtue to the post, which was that of danger, as well as of distinction. For a long period, the suffrages of the community ratified the appointment. Episcopal government was thus, as long as Christianity remained unleavened by worldly passions and interests, essentially popular. The principle of subordination was inseparable from the humility of the first converts. Rights are never clearly defined till they are contested; nor is authority limited as long as it rests upon general reverence. When, on the one side, aggression, on the other, jealousy and mistrust, begin, then it must be fenced by usage and defined by law. Thus while we are inclined to consider the succession of bishops from the Apostolic times to be undeniable, the nature and extent of authority which they derived from the Apostles is altogether uncertain. The ordination or consecration, whatever it might be to that office, of itself conveyed neither inspiration nor the power of working miracles, which, with the direct commission from the Lord himself, distinguished and set apart the primary Apostles from the rest of mankind. It was only in a very limited and imperfect sense that they could, even in the sees founded by the Apostles, be called the successors of the Apostles.

Authority  
of the  
bishop.

The presbyters were, in their origin, the *ruling* powers of the young communities; but in a society founded solely on a religious basis, religious qualifications would be almost exclusively considered. In the absence, therefore, of the primary teacher, they would assume that office likewise. In this they would differ from the Jewish elders. As the most eminent in piety and Christian attainments, they would be advanced by, or at least with, the general consent, to their dignified station. The same piety and attainments would designate them as best qualified to keep up and to extend the general system of instruction. They would be the regular and perpetual expositors of the Christian law (1); the reciters of the life, the doctrines, the death, the resurrection of Christ; till the Gospels were written, and generally received, they would be the living Evangelists, the oral Scriptures, the spoken Gospel. They would not merely regulate and

The pres-  
byters.

(1) Here, likewise, the possessors of the *χαρισματα* would be the casual and subsidiary instructors, or rather the gifted promoters of Christian piety each in his separate sphere, according to his distinctive grace. But besides these, even if they were found in all churches, which is by no means clear, regular and syste-

matic teachers would be necessary to a religion which probably could only subsist, certainly could not propagate itself with activity or to any great extent, except by this constant exposition of its principles in the public assembly, as well as in the more private communications of individuals.



lead the devotions, administer the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper, but repeat again and again, for the further confirmation of the believers, and the conversion of Jews and Heathens, the facts and the tenets of the new religion. The government, in fact, in communities bound together by Christian brotherhood (such as we may suppose to have been the first Christian churches, which were happily undistracted by the disputes arising out of the Judaical controversy) would be an easy office, and entirely subordinate to that of instruction and edification. The communities would be almost self-governed by the principle of Christian love which first drew them together. The deacons were from the first an inferior order, and exercised a purely ministerial office; distributing the common fund to the poorer members, though the administration of the pecuniary concerns of the church soon became of such importance as to require the superintendence of the higher rulers. The other functions of the deacons were altogether of a subordinate character.

Such would be the ordinary development of a Christian community, in the first case, monarchical, as founded by an individual Apostle or recognised teacher of Christianity; subsequently, in the absence of that teacher, aristocratical, under a senate formed according to Jewish usage, though not precisely on Jewish principles; until the place of the Apostle being supplied by a bishop, in a certain sense, his representative or successor, it would revert to a monarchical form, limited rather by the religion itself than by any appointed controlling power. As long as the same holy spirit of love and charity actuated the whole body, the result would be an harmony, not from the counteracting powers of opposing forces, but from the consentient will of the general body; and the will of the government would be the expression of the universal popular sentiment (1). Where, however, from the first, the Christian community was formed of conflicting parties, or where conflicting principles began to operate immediately upon the foundation of the society, no individual would be generally recognised as the authoritative teacher, and the assumption and recognition of the episcopate would be more slow; or, indeed, would not take place at all till the final triumph of one of the conflicting parties. They retained, of necessity, the republican form. Such was the state of the Corinthian church, which was formed from its origin, or almost immediately divided into three separate parties, with a leading

Church of  
Corinth an  
exception.

(1) Such is the theory of episcopal government in a pleasing passage in the Epistles of Ignatius. "Ὅθεν πρέπει ὑμῖν συντρέχειν τῇ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου γνώμῃ. Ὅπερ καὶ ποιεῖτε. Τὸ γὰρ ἀξιονόμαστον ὑμῶν πρεσβυτέρων, οὕτως συνήρμυσται τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ ὡς χορδαὶ κιθάρας· διὰ τοῦτο ἐν τῇ ὁμο-

νοίᾳ ὑμῶν, καὶ συμφωνῶν ἀγάπῃ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἀδεται καὶ οἱ κατ' ἀνδρά δὲ χορὸς γίνεσθε, ἵνα σύμφωνοι ὄντες ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ, χρῶμα θεοῦ λαβόντες ἐν ἐνότητι, ἀδετε ἐν φωνῇ μιᾷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ πατρὶ, etc. Ad Ephes. p. 12. edit. Cotel. I speak of these epistles in a subsequent note.

teacher or teachers at the head of each (1). The Petrine, or the ultra Judaic, the Apolline, or more moderate Jewish party, contested the supremacy with the followers of St. Paul. Different individuals possessed, exercised, and even abused different gifts. The authority of Paul himself appears clearly, by his elaborate vindication of his apostolic office, by no means to have been generally recognised. No apostolic head, therefore, would assume an uncontested supremacy, nor would the parties coalesce in the choice of a superior. Corinth, probably, was the last community which settled down under the general episcopal constitution.

The manner and the period of the separation of a distinct class, an hierarchy, from the general body of the community; and the progress of the great division between the clergy and the laity (2), are equally obscure with the primitive constitution of the church. Like the Judaism of the provinces, Christianity had no sacerdotal order. But as the more eminent members of the community were admitted to take the lead, on account of their acknowledged religious superiority, from their zeal, their talents, their gifts, their sanctity, the general reverence would, of itself, speedily set them apart as of a higher order; they would form the purest aristocracy, and soon be divided by a distinct line of demarcation from the rest of the community. Whatever the ordination might be which designated them for their peculiar function, whatever power or authority might be communicated by the "imposition of hands," it would add little to the reverence with which they were invested. It was at first the Christian who sanctified the function, afterwards the function sanctified the man. But the civil and religious concerns of the church were so moulded up together, or rather, the temporal were so absorbed by the spiritual, that not merely the teacher, but the governor, not merely the bishop properly so called, but the presbyter in his character of ruler, as well as of teacher, shared in the same peculiar veneration. The bishop would be necessarily mingled up in the few secular affairs of the community, the governors bear their part in the religious ceremonial. In this respect, again, they differed from their prototypes, or elders of the synagogue. Their office was, of necessity, more religious. The admission of members in the Jewish synagogue, except in the case of proselytes of righteousness, was a matter of hereditary right: circumcision was a domestic, not a public ceremony. But baptism,

(1) I was led to conjecture that the distracted state of the church of Corinth might induce the Apostles to establish elsewhere a more firm and vigorous authority, before I remembered the passage of St. Jerome quoted above, which coincides with this view. Corinth has been generally taken as the model of the early Christian constitution; I suspect, that it was rather an anomaly.

(2) Already the *διακονιαι* are a distinct class in

the Epistle of Clemens to the Corinthians (c. xi. p. 170. edit. Cotelier.). This epistle is confidently appealed to by both parties in the controversy about church government, and altogether satisfies neither. It is clear, however, from the tone of the whole epistle, that the church at Corinth was any thing rather than a model of church government: it had been rent with schisms ever since the days of the Apostle.

or the initiation into the Christian community, was a solemn ceremonial, requiring previous examination and probation. The governing power would possess and exercise the authority to admit into the community. They would perform, or at all events superintend, the initiatory rite of baptism. The other distinctive rite of Christianity, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, would require a more active interference and co-operation on the part of those who presided over the community. To this there was nothing analogous in the office of the Jewish elder. Order would require that this ceremony should be administered by certain individuals. If the bishop presided, after his appointment, both at the Lord's Supper itself and in the agape or feast which followed it, the elders would assist, not merely in maintaining order, but would officiate throughout the ceremony. In proportion to the reverence for the consecrated elements would be the respect towards those under whose especial prayers, and in whose hands, probably from the earliest period, they were sanctified for the use of the assembly. The presbyters would likewise possess the chief voice, a practical initiative, in the nomination of the bishop. From all these different functions, the presbyters, and at length the deacons, became, as well as the bishop, a sacred order. But the exclusive or sacerdotal principle once admitted in a religious community, its own corporate spirit, and the public reverence, would cause it to recede further and further, and draw the line of demarcation with greater rigour and depth. They would more and more insulate themselves from the commonalty of the Christian republic; they would become a senate, a patrician, or privileged order; and this secession into their peculiar sphere would be greatly facilitated by the regular gradations of the faithful and the catechumen, the perfect and the imperfect, the initiate and half-initiate, Christians. The greater the variety, the more strict the subordination of ranks.

Thus the bishop gradually assumed the title of pontiff; the presbyters became a sacerdotal order. From the Old Testament, and even from paganism, the Christians, at first as ennobling metaphors, adopted their sacred appellations. Insensibly the meaning of these significant titles worked into the Christian system. They assumed, as it were, a privilege of nearer approach to the Deity; and a priestly caste grew rapidly up in a religion which, in its primary institution, acknowledged only one mediator between earth and heaven. We shall subsequently trace the growth of the sacerdotal principle, and the universal establishment of the hierarchy.



## CHAPTER V.

### CHRISTIANITY AND ORIENTALISM.

CHRISTIANITY had not only to contend with the Judaism of its native region, and the Paganism of the Western world, but likewise with the Asiatic religions, which, in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, maintained their ground, or mingled themselves with the Grecian Polytheism, and had even penetrated into Palestine. In the silence of its authentic records, the direct progress of Christianity in the East can neither be accurately traced nor clearly estimated; its conflict with Orientalism is chiefly visible in the influence of the latter upon the general system of Christianity, and in the tenets of the different sects which, from Simon Magus to Manes, attempted to reconcile the doctrines of the Gospel with the theogonical systems of Asia. In the West, Christianity advanced with gradual, but unobstructed and unreceding, progress, till, first the Roman empire, and successively the barbarous nations who occupied or subdued the rest of Europe, were brought within its pale. No new religion arose to dispute its supremacy; and the feeble attempt of Julian to raise up a Platonic Paganism in opposition to the religion of Christ must have failed, even if it had not been cut short in its first growth by the death of its imperial patron. In Asia, the progress of Christianity was suddenly arrested by the revival of Zoroastrianism, after the restoration of the Persian kingdom upon the ruins of the Parthian monarchy; and, at a later period, the vestiges of its former success were almost entirely obliterated by the desolating and all-absorbing conquests of Mahometanism. The Armenian was the only national church which resisted alike the persecuting edicts of the Sassanian fire-worshippers, and, submitting to the yoke of the Mahometan conqueror, rejected the worship of the Prophet. The other scattered communities of Christians, disseminated through various parts of Asia, on the coast of Malabar, perhaps in China, have no satisfactory evidence of Apostolic or even of very early date: they are so deeply impregnated with the Nestorian system of Christianity, which, during the interval between the decline of the reformed Zoroastrianism and the first outburst of Islamism, spread to a great extent throughout every part of the Eastern continent (1), that there is every reason to suppose them Nestorian in their origin (2). The contest, then, of Chris-

Oriental religions.

(1) There is an extremely good view of the origin and history of the Christian communities in India, in Bohlen, *das alte Indien*.

(2) Compare the new edition of Gibbon with the editor's note on the Nestorian Christians and the famous inscription of Siganfu, viii. 347.

tianity with the Eastern religions must be traced in their reaction upon the new religion of the West. By their treacherous alliance, they probably operated more extensively to the detriment of the Evangelic religion than Paganism by its open opposition. Asiatic influences have worked more completely into the body and essence of Christianity than any other foreign elements; and it is by no means improbable that tenets, which had their origin in India, have for many centuries predominated, or materially affected the Christianity of the whole Western world.

Situation  
of Pales-  
tine favou-  
rable for a  
new reli-  
gion.

Palestine was admirably situated to become the centre and point of emanation for an universal religion. On the confines of Asia and Europe, yet sufficiently secluded from both to be out of the way of the constant flux and reflux of a foreign population, it commanded Egypt, and, through Egypt, associated Africa with the general moral kingdom. But it was not merely calculated for the birthplace of an universal faith by its local position; Judaism, as it were, in its character (putting out of sight, for an instant, its divine origin) stood between the religions of the East and the West. It was the connecting link between the European and the Asiatic mind. In speculative sublimity, the doctrine of the Divine Unity soared to an equal height with the vast and imaginative cosmogonies of the East, while in its practical tendencies it approximated to the active and rational genius of the West.

Judaism.

The religions of Asia appear, if not of regularly affiliated descent, yet to possess a common and generic character, modified, indeed, by the genius of the different people, and, perhaps, by the prevailing tone of mind in the authors and founders of new doctrines. From the banks of the Ganges, probably from the shores of the Yellow Sea and the coasts of further India, to the Phœnician borders of the Mediterranean, and the undefined limits of Phrygia in Asia Minor, there was that connection and similitude, that community of certain elementary principles, that tendency to certain combinations of physical and moral ideas, which may be expressed by the term Orientalism (1). The speculative theology of the higher, the sacerdotal, order, which in some countries left the superstitions of the vulgar undisturbed, or allowed their own more sublime conceptions to be lowered to their rude and limited material notions, aspired to the primal Source of Being. The Emanation system of India, according to which the whole worlds flowed from the Godhead and were finally to be reabsorbed into it; the Pantheism into which this degenerated, and which made the collective universe itself the Deity; the Dualism of Persia, according to which the antagonist powers were created by, or proceeded from, the One Supreme and Un-

General  
character  
of Orient-  
alism.

(1) Compare Windischman, *Philosophie in fortgang der Welt Geschichte*. Windischman was a friend, I believe I may venture to say, a disciple, of F. Schlegel, and belongs to the high

Roman Catholic school in Germany. His book, which is full of abstruse thought and learning, develops the theory of a primitive tradition diffused through the East.

created; the Chaldean doctrine of divine Energies or Intelligences, the prototypes of the cabalistic Sephiroth, and the later Gnostic Æons, the same, no doubt, under different names, with the Æon and Protophenes, the Genos and Genea, with their regularly-coupled descendants in the Phœnician cosmogony of Sanchoniathon; and finally, the primitive and simpler worship of Egypt; all these are either branches of one common stock, or expressions of the same state of the human mind, working with kindred activity on the same visible phenomena of nature, and with the same object. The Asiatic mind impersonated, though it did not, with the Greek, humanise every thing. Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, the Creative and Destructive energy of nature, the active and passive Powers of generation, moral Perfection and Wisdom, Reason and Speech, even Agriculture and the Pastoral life, each was a distinct and intelligent being; they wedded each other according to their apparent correspondences; they begat progeny according to the natural affiliation or consequence of ideas. One great elementary principle pervaded the whole religious systems of the East, the connection of *moral with physical ideas*, the inherent *purity, the divinity, of mind or spirit*, the inalienable *evil of its antagonist, matter*. Whether Matter co-existed with the First Great Cause; whether it was created by his power, but from its innate malignity became insubordinate to his will; whether it was extraneous to his existence, necessarily subsisting, though without form, till its inert and shapeless mass was worked upon by the Deity himself, or by his primal power or emanation, the Demiurge or Creator of the existing worlds: on these points the different national creeds were endlessly diversified. But in its various forms, the principle itself was the universal doctrine of the Eastern world; it was developed in their loftiest philosophy (in fact, their higher philosophy and their speculative religion were the same thing); it gave a kind of colouring even to their vulgar superstition, and operated, in many cases, almost to an incredible extent, on their social and political system. This great primal tenet is alike the elementary principle of the higher Brahminism and the more moral Buddhism of India and the remoter East. The theory of the division of castes supposes that a larger portion of the pure mind of the Deity is infused into the sacerdotal and superior orders; they are nearer the Deity, and with more immediate hope of being reabsorbed into the divine essence; while the lower classes are more inextricably immersed in the grosser matter of the world, their feeble portion of the essential spirit of the Divinity contracted and lost in the predominant mass of corruption and malignity (1). The Buddhist, substituting a moral for an here-

Purity of  
mind.  
Malignity  
of matter.

The uni-  
versal pri-  
mary prin-  
ciple.

(1) The self-existing power declared the purest part of him to be the mouth. Since the Brahmen sprung from the most excellent part; since

he was the first horn, and since he possesses the Veda, he is by right the chief of the whole creation. Jones's Menu, i. 92, 93.



ditary approximation to the pure and elementary mind, rests, nevertheless, on the same primal theory, and carries the notion of the abstraction of the spiritual part from the foul and corporeal being to an equal, if not a greater height of contemplative mysticism (1). Hence the sanctity of fire among the Persians (2); that element which is most subtle and defæcated from all material corruption; it is therefore the representative of pure elementary mind, of Deity itself (3). It exists independent of the material forms in which it abides, the sun and the heavenly bodies. To infect this holy element with any excretion or emanation from the material form of man; to contaminate it with the putrescent effluvia of the dead and soulless corpse, was the height of guilt and impiety.

Source of  
Asceticism.

This one simple principle is the parent of that Asceticism which maintained its authority among all the older religions of the remoter East, forced its way at a very early period into Christianity, where, for some centuries it exercised a predominant influence, and subdued even the active and warlike genius of Mahometanism to its dreamy and extatic influence. On the cold table-lands of Thibet, in the forests of India, among the busy population of China, on the burning shores of Siam, in Egypt and in Palestine, in Christianised Europe, in Mahometanised Asia, the worshipper of the Lama, the Faquir, the Bonze, the Talapoin, the Essene, the Therapeutist, the Monk, and the Dervish, have withdrawn from the society of man, in order to abstract the pure mind from the dominion of foul and corrupting matter. Under each system, the perfection of human nature was estrangement from the influence of the senses,—those senses which were enslaved to the material elements of the world; an approximation to the essence of the Deity, by a total secession from the affairs, the interests, the passions, the thoughts, the common being and nature of man. The practical operation of this elementary principle of Eastern religion has deeply influenced the whole history of man. But it had made no progress in Europe till after the introduction of Christianity. The manner in which it allied itself with, or rather incorporated itself into, a system, to the original nature and design of which it appears altogether foreign, will form a most important and perhaps not uninteresting chapter in the History of Christianity.

Celibacy.

Celibacy was the offspring of Asceticism, but it does not appear absolutely essential to it; whether insulted nature re-asserts its rights, and reconciles to the practice that which is in apparent opposition to the theory, or whether it revenges, as it were, this rebellion of nature on one point, by its more violent and successful

(1) See the tracts of Mahony, Joinville, Hodgson, and Wilson, in the *Asiatic Researches*; Schmidt, *Geschichte der Ost Mongolen*. Bergman, *Nomadische Streifereyen*, etc.

(2) Hyde, *de Relig. Persarum*, p. 13. et alibi.

Kleuker, *Anhang zum Zendavesta*, vol. i. p. 116. 117. De Guigniaut, *Religions de l'Antiquité*, I, ii. c. 3, p. 333.

(3) Kleuker, *Anhang zum Zendavesta*, vol. i. pt. 2. p. 147. De Guigniaut, *ubi supra*.

invasions upon its unconquerable propensities on others. The Muni in India is accompanied by his wife, who shares his solitude, and seems to offer no impediment to his sanctity (1), though in some cases it may be that all connubial intercourse is sternly renounced. In Palestine, the Essene, in his higher state of perfection, stood in direct opposition to the spirit of the books of Moses, on which he still looked with the profoundest reverence, by altogether refraining from marriage. It was perhaps in this form that Eastern Asceticism first crept into Christianity. It assumed the elevating and attractive character of higher personal purity ; it drew the line of demarcation more rigidly against the loose morality of the Heathen ; it afforded the advantage of detaching the first itinerant preachers of Christianity more entirely from worldly interests ; enabled them to devote their whole undistracted attention to the propagation of the Faith, and left them, as it were, more at loose from the world, ready to break the few and slender ties which connected them with it at the first summons to a glorious martyrdom (2). But it was not, as we shall presently observe, till Gnosticism began to exercise its influence on Christianity (3) that, emulous of its dangerous rival, or infected with its foreign opinions, the Church, in its general sentiment, espoused and magnified the pre-eminent virtue of celibacy (4).

The European mind of the older world, as represented by the Greeks and Romans, repelled for a long time, in the busy turmoil of political development, and the absorbing career of war and conquest, this principle of inactivity and secession from the ordinary affairs of life. No sacerdotal caste established this principle of superiority over the active warrior, or even the laborious husbandman. With the citizen of the stirring and factious republics of Greece, the highest virtue was of a purely political and practical character. The whole man was public : his individuality, the sense of which was continually suggested and fostered under the other system, was lost in the member of the commonwealth. That which contributed nothing to the service of the state was held in no re-

Unknown  
in Greece  
and Rome.

(1) Abandoning all food eaten in towns, and all his household utensils, let him repair to the lonely wood, committing the care of his wife to his sons, or accompanied by her, if she choose to attend him. Sir W. Jones's *Memoirs*, vi. 3. I venture to refer to the pathetic tale of the hermit with his wife and son, from the *Mahā Bhārata*, in my translations from the Sanskrit.

In the very curious account of the Buddhist monks (the *Σαμανασι*—the *Schamans*) in Porphyrius de *Abstinentiā*, lib. iv. 17., the Buddhist ascetic abandons his wife; and this in general agrees with the Buddhist theory. Female contact is unlawful to the Buddha ascetic. See a curious instance in Mr. Wilson's *Hindu Theatre*—*The Toycart*. Act viii., sub fine.

(2) Clement of Alexandria, however, asserts that St. Paul was really married, but left his wife behind him, lest she should interfere with

his ministry. This is his interpretation of 1 Cor. ix. 5.

(3) Tertullian adv. Marc. i. 29. Non tingitur apud illum caro, nisi virgo, nisi vidua, nisi caelebs, nisi divortio baptismum mereatur \* \* nec præscribimus sed suademus sanctitatem \* \* tunc denique conjugium exerte defendentes cum inimicè accusatur spurcitæ nomine in destructionem creatoris qui proinde conjugium pro rei honestate benedixit, incrementum generis humani \* \*.

(4) Compare the whole argument of the third book of the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria. In one passage he condemns celibacy, as leading to misanthropy. Συνορῶ δὲ ὅπως τῇ προστάσει τοῦ γάμου οἱ μὲν ἀπισχημένοι τούτου, μὴ κατὰ τὴν ἀγίαν γνώσιν, εἰς μισανθρώπιαν ὑπερβύσαν, καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀγάπης οἴχεται παρ' αὐτοῖς. *Strom.* iii. 9.

spect. The mind, in its abstracted flights, obtained little honour, it was only as it worked upon the welfare, the amusement, or the glory of the republic, that its dignity was estimated. The philosopher might discuss the comparative superiority of the practical or the contemplative life, but his loftiest contemplations were occupied with realities, or what may be considered idealising those realities to a higher degree of perfection : to make good citizens was the utmost ambition of his wisdom, an Utopia was his heaven. The Cynic, who in the East, or in Europe, after it became impregnated with Eastern doctrines, would have retired into the desert to his solitary hermitage, in order to withdraw himself entirely from the common interests, sentiments, and connections of mankind ; in Greece, took up his station in the crowded forum, or pitching his tub in the midst of the concourse at the public games, inveighed against the vices and follies of mankind. Plato, if he had followed the natural bent of his genius, might have introduced, and indeed did introduce, as much as the Grecian mind was capable of imbibing, of this theory of the opposition of mind and matter, with its ordinary consequences. The communities of his older master Pythagoras, who had probably visited the East, and drank deep of the Oriental mysticism, approached in some respects nearer to the contemplative character of monastic institutions. But the active mind of the Greek predominated, and the followers of Pythagoras, instead of founding cœnobitic institutions, or secluding themselves in meditative solitude, settled some of the flourishing republics of Magna Græcia. But the great master, in whose steps Plato professed to tread more closely, was so essentially practical and unimagina-  
 tive, as to bind his followers down to a less Oriental system of philosophy. While, therefore, in his *Timæus*, Plato attempted to harmonise parts of the cosmogonical theories of Asia with the more humanised mythology of Greece, the work which was more accordant to the genius of his country, was his *Republic*, in which all his idealism was, as it were, confined to the earth. Even his religion, though of much sublimer cast than the popular superstition, was yet considered chiefly in its practical operation on the welfare of the state. It was his design to elevate humanity to a higher state of moral dignity ; to cultivate the material body as well as the immaterial soul, to the height of perfection ; not to sever, as far as possible, the connection between these ill-assorted companions, or to withdraw the purer mind from its social and political sphere, into solitary and inactive communion with the Deity. In Rome, the general tendency of the national mind was still more essentially public and political. In the republic, except in a few less distinguished men, the Lælii and the Attici, even their philosophy was an intellectual recreation between the more pressing avocations of their higher duties : it was either to brace and mature the mind for fu-

Plato.

Rome.



ture service to the state, or as a solace in hours of disappointed ambition, or the haughty satiety of glory. Civil science was the end and aim of all their philosophic meditation. Like their ancient king, if they retired for communion with the Egeria of philosophy, it was in order to bring forth, on their return, more ample stores of political and legislative wisdom. Under the imperial government, they took refuge in the lofty reveries of the porch, as they did in inordinate luxury, from the degradation and enforced inactivity of servitude. They fled to the philosophic retirement, from the barrenness, in all high or stirring emotions, which had smitten the Senate and the Comitia; still looking back with a vain but lingering hope that the state might summon them again from retirement without dignity, from a contemplative life, which by no means implied an approximation to the divine, but rather a debasement, of the human nature. Some, indeed, degraded their high tone of philosophy by still mingling in the servile politics of the day; Seneca lived and died the votary and the victim of court intrigue. The Thræseas stood aloof, not in extatic meditation on the primal Author of Being, but on the departed liberties of Rome; their soul aspired no higher than to unite itself with the ancient genius of the republic.

Orientalism had made considerable progress towards the West before the appearance of Christianity. While the popular Pharisaism of the Jews had embodied some of the more practical tenets of Zoroastrianism, the doctrines of the remoter East had found a welcome reception with the Essene. Yet even with him, regular and unintermitting labour, not inert and meditative abstraction, was the principle of the ascetic community. It might almost seem that there subsisted some secret and indelible congeniality, some latent consanguinity, whether from kindred, common descent, or from conquest, between the caste-divided population on the shores of the Ganges, and the same artificial state of society in the valley of the Nile, so as to assimilate in so remarkable a manner their religion (1). It is certain, that the genuine Indian mysticism first established a permanent western settlement in the deserts of Egypt. Its first combination seems to have been with the Egyptian Judaism of Alexandria, and to have arisen from the dreaming Platonism, which in the schools of that city had been engrafted on the Mosaic institutes. The Egyptian monks were the lineal descendants of the Jewish Therapeutæ, described by Philo (2). Though the Therapeutæ, like the Essenes, were in some respects a productive community, yet they approached much nearer to the contemplative and indolent fraternities of the farther East.

Orientalism in Western Asia.

(1) Bohlen's work, *Das alte Indien*, of which the excellence in all other respects, as a condensed abstract of all that our own countrymen and the scholars of Germany and France have collect-

ed concerning India, will be universally acknowledged, is written to maintain the theory of the early connection of India and Egypt.

(2) Philonis Opera. Mangey, vol. ii. p. 471.

The arid and rocky desert around them was too stubborn to make much return to their less regular and systematic cultivation; visionary indolence would grow upon them by degrees. The communities either broke up into the lairs of solitary hermits, or were constantly throwing off their more enthusiastic votaries deeper into the desert: the severer mortifications of the flesh required a more complete isolation from the occupations, as well as the amusements or enjoyments of life. To change the wilderness into a garden by patient industry, was to enthrall the spirit in some degree to the service of the body; and in process of time, the principle was carried to its height. The more dreary the wilderness, the more unquestioned the sanctity of its inhabitant; the more complete and painful the privation, the more holy the worshipper; the more the man put off his own nature, and sank below the animal to vegetative existence, the more consummate his spiritual perfection. The full growth of this system was of a much later period; it did not come to maturity till after Christianity had passed through its conflict with Gnosticism; but its elements were, no doubt, floating about in the different western regions of Asia, and either directly through Gnosticism, or from the emulation of the two sects, which outbid each other, as it were, in austerity, it worked, at length, into the very intimate being of the Gospel religion.

Combina-  
tion of Ori-  
entalism  
with  
Christia-  
nity.

The singular felicity, the skill and dexterity, if we may so speak, with which Christianity at first wound its way through these conflicting elements, combining what was pure and lofty in each, in some instances unavoidably speaking their language, and simplifying, harmonising, and modifying each to its own peculiar system, increases our admiration of its unrivalled wisdom, its deep insight into the universal nature of man, and its pre-acquaintance, as it were, with the countless diversities of human character, prevailing at the time of its propagation. But, unless the same profound wisdom had watched over its inviolable preservation, which presided over its origin; unless it had been constantly administered with the same superiority to the common passions and interests, and speculative curiosity of man, a reaction of the several systems over which it prevailed was inevitable. On a wide and comprehensive survey of the whole history of Christianity, and considering it as left altogether to its own native force and impulse, it is difficult to estimate how far the admission, even the predominance, of these foreign elements, by which it was enabled to maintain its hold on different ages and races, may not have contributed both to its original success and its final permanence. The Eastern asceticism outbid Christianity in that austerity, that imposing self-sacrifice, that intensity of devotion, which acts with the greatest rapidity, and secures the most lasting authority over rude and unenlightened minds. By coa-

lescing to a certain point with its antagonist, it embraced within its expanding pale those who would otherwise, according to the spirit of their age, have been carried beyond its sphere by some enthusiasm more popular, and better suited to the genius of the time, or the temperament of the individual. If it lost in purity, it gained in power, perhaps, in permanence. No doubt, in its first contest with Orientalism were sown those seeds which grew up at a later period into Monasticism; it rejected the tenets, but admitted the more insidious principle of Gnosticism; yet there can be little doubt that in the dark ages, the monastic spirit was among the great conservative and influential elements of Christianity.

The form in which Christianity first encountered this wide-spread Orientalism, was either Gnosticism (1), or, if that philosophy had not then become consolidated into a system, those opinions which subsequently grew up into that prevalent doctrine of Western Asia. The first Orientalist was Simon Magus. In the conflict with St. Peter, related in the Acts, nothing transpires as to the personal history of this remarkable man, excepting the extensive success with which he had practised his magical arts in Samaria, and the oriental title which he assumed—"the Power of God." His first overtures to the Apostle appear as though he were desirous of conciliating the friendship and favour of the new teacher, and would not have been unwilling to have acted a subordinate part in the formation of their increasing sect. But from his first rejection, Simon Magus was an opponent, if there be any truth in the wild legends, which are still extant, the rival, of Christianity (2). On the arrival of the Christian teachers in Samaria, where, up to that period, his influence had predominated, he paid homage to the reality of their miracles, by acknowledging their superiority to his own. Still, it should seem that he only considered them as more adroit wonder-workers, or, as is more probable, possessed of some peculiar secrets beyond his own knowledge of the laws of nature, or, possibly (for imposture and superstition are ever closely allied), he may have supposed that they had intercourse with more powerful spirits or intelligences than his own. Jesus was to him either some extraordinary proficient in magic, who had imparted his prevailing gifts to his followers, the Apostles; or some superior genius, who lent himself to their bidding; or what Simon asserted himself to be, some power emanating more directly from the primal Deity. The "gift of the

Simon  
Magus.

(1) In this view of Gnosticism, besides constant reference to the original authorities, I must acknowledge my obligations to Brucker, *Hist. Phil.* vol. ii. p. 1. c. 3.; to Mosheim, *de Reb. Christ. ante Const. Mag.*; to Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichisme*; but above all to the excellent *Histoire du Gnosticisme*, by M. Matter, of Strasburg, 2 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1828.

(2) It is among the most hopeless difficulties in early Christian history to decide, to one's own

satisfaction, what groundwork of truth there may be in those works which bear the name of St. Clement, and relate the contests of St. Peter and Simon Magus. That in their present form they are a kind of religious romance, few will doubt; but they are certainly of great antiquity, and it is difficult to suppose either pure invention or mere embellishments of the simple history in the Acts.



Holy Ghost" seemed to communicate a great portion, at least, of this magic influence, and to place the initiated in possession of some mighty secrets, or to endow him with the control of some potent spirits. Simon's offer of pecuniary remuneration betrays at once either that his own object was sordid, as he suspected theirs to be, or, at the highest, he sought to increase, by a combination with them, his own reputation and influence. Nor, on the indignant refusal of St. Peter, does his entreaty for their prayers, lest he should incur the wrath of their offended Deity, by any means imply a more accurate and Christian conception of their religion; it is exactly the tone of a man, half imposter and half enthusiast, who trembles before the offended anger of some mightier superhuman being, whom his ineffectual magic has no power to control or to appease. We collect no more than this from the narrative in the Acts (1).

Yet, unless Simon was in fact a personage of considerable importance during the early history of Christianity, it is difficult to account for his becoming, as he is called by Beausobre, the hero of the Romance of Heresy. If Simon was the same with that magician, a Cypriot by birth, who was employed by Felix as agent in his intrigue to detach Drusilla from her husband (2), this part of his character accords with the charge of licentiousness advanced both against his life and his doctrines by his Christian opponents. This is by no means improbable; and indeed, even if he was not a person thus politically prominent and influential, the early writers of Christianity would scarcely have concurred in representing him as a formidable and dangerous antagonist of the Faith, as a kind of personal rival of St. Peter, without some other groundwork for the fiction besides the collision recorded in the Acts. The doctrines which are ascribed to him and to his followers, who continued to exist for several centuries (3), harmonise with the glimpse of his character and tenets in the writings of St. Luke. Simon probably was one of that class of adventurers which abounded at this period, or, like Apollonius of Tyana, and others at a later time, with whom the opponents of Christianity attempted to confound Jesus and his Apostles. His doctrine was Oriental in its language and in its pretensions (4). He was the first *Æon* or emanation, or rather perhaps the first manifestation of the primal Deity. He assumed not merely the title of the Great Power or Virtue of God, but all the other appellations, — the Word, the Perfection, the Paraclete, the Almighty, the whole combined attributes of the Deity (5). He had a companion,

His real  
character  
and tenets.

(1) Acts, viii. 9-24.

(2) Joseph. Ant. xx. 5. 2. Compare Krebs and Kuhnke, in loco Act. Apost.

(3) Origen denies the existence of living Simonians in his day (contra Cels. lib. i.); which implies that they had subsisted nearly up to that time.

(4) Irenæus, lib. i. c. 20.; the fullest of the

early authorities on Simon. Compare Grabe's notes. The personal conflict with St. Peter in Rome, and the famous inscription, "Semoni Sanco," must I think be abandoned to legend.

(5) Ego sum Sermo Dei, ego sum Speciosus, ego Paracletus, ego Omnipotens, ego omnia Dei. Hieronym. in Math. Op. iv. 114.

Helena, according to the statement of his enemies, a beautiful prostitute (1), whom he found at Tyre, who became in like manner the first conception (the Ennœa) of the Deity; but who, by her conjunction with matter, had been enslaved to its malignant influence, and having fallen under the power of evil angels, had been in a constant state of transmigration, and among other mortal bodies, had occupied that of the famous Helen of Troy. Beausobre (2), who elevates Simon into a Platonic philosopher, explains the Helena as a sublime allegory. She was the Psyche of his philosophic romance. The soul, by evil influences, had become imprisoned in matter. By her the Deity had created the angels: the angels, enamoured of her, had inextricably entangled her in that polluting bondage in order to prevent her return to heaven. To fly from their embraces, she had passed from body to body. Connecting this fiction with the Grecian mythology, she was Minerva, or impersonated Wisdom; perhaps, also, Helena, or embodied Beauty.

His Helena.

It is by no means inconsistent with the character of Orientalism, or with the spirit of the times, to reconcile much of these different theories. According to the Eastern system of teaching by symbolic action, Simon may have carried about a living and real illustration of his allegory: his Helena may have been to his disciples the mystic image of an emanation from the divine Mind; her native purity, indeed, originally defiled by the contagious malignity of matter, but under the guidance of the Hierophant, or rather by her sanctifying association with the "Power of God," either soaring again to her primal sanctity, or even while the grosser body was still abandoned to its inalienable corruption, emancipating the uninfected and unparticipant soul from all the depravation, almost from the consciousness, of corporal indulgence. Be this as it may; whether the opinions of Simon were derived from Platonism, or, as it is much more likely, immediately from Eastern sources, his history is singularly characteristic of the state of the public mind at this period of the world. An individual assuming the lofty appellation of the Power of God, and with his female associate, personating the male and female Energies or Intelligences of the Deity, appears to our colder European reason a fiction too monstrous even for the proverbial credulity of man. But this Magianism of Simon must be considered in reference to the whole theory of theurgy or magic, and the prevalent theosophy or notions of the divine nature. In the East, superstition had in general repudiated the grossly material forms in which the Western anthropomorphism had embodied its gods; it remained more spiritual, but it made up for this by the fantastic manner in which it multiplied the gradations of spiritual being more or less remotely connected with the first great Supreme.

Probability of the history of Simon.

(1) Irenæus, *ibid.*

(2) Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme*, i. 35.

The more subtle the spirits, in general, they were the more beneficent; the more intimately associated with matter, the more malignant. The avowed object of Simon was to destroy the authority of the evil spirits, and to emancipate mankind from their control. This peopling of the universe with a regularly descending succession of beings was common to the whole East, perhaps, in great part, to the West. The later Jewish doctrine of angels and devils approached nearly to it; it lurked in Platonism, and assumed a higher form in the Eastern cosmogonies. In these it not merely assigned guardian or hostile beings to individuals or to nations, but its peculiar creator to the material universe, from which it aspired altogether to keep aloof the origin and author of the spiritual world; though the latter superior and benignant Being was ordinarily introduced as interfering in some manner to correct, to sanctify, and to spiritualise the world of man; and it was in accordance with this part of the theory, that Simon proclaimed himself the representative of Deity.

But Simon was at no time a Christian, neither was the heir and successor of his doctrines, Menander (1); and it was not till it had made some progress in the Syrian and Asiatic cities, that Christianity came into closer contact with those Gnostic, or prognostic systems, which, instead of opposing it with direct hostility, received it with more insidious veneration, and warped it into an unnatural accordance with its own principles. As the Jew watched the appearance of Jesus, and listened to his announcement as the Messiah, in anxious suspense, expecting that even yet he would assume those attributes of temporal grandeur and visible majesty which, according to his conceptions, were inseparable from the true Messiah; as even after the death of Jesus, the Jewish Christians still eagerly anticipated his immediate return to judgment, his millennial reign, and his universal dominion: so many of the Oriental speculatists, as soon as Christianity began to be developed, hailed it as the completion of their own wild theories; and forced it into accordance with their universal tenet of distinct intelligences emanating from the primal Being. Thus Christ, who, to the vulgar Jew was to be a temporal king, to the Cabalist or the Chaldean became a Sephiroth, an Æon, an emanation from the One Supreme. While the author of the religion remained on earth, and while the religion itself was still in its infancy, Jesus was in danger of being degraded into a king of the Jews; his Gospel of becoming the code of a new religious republic. Directly it got beyond the borders of Palestine, and the name of Christ had acquired sanctity and veneration in the Eastern cities, he became a kind of metaphysical impersonation,

Gnosti-  
cism con-  
nects itself  
with  
Christi-  
anity.

(1) Menander baptized in his own name, being sent by the *Supreme Power* of God. His baptism conferred a resurrection not only to eternal life but to eternal youth. An opinion, as M. Matter

justly observes, not easily reconcilable to those who considered the body the unworthy prison of the soul. Irenæus, i. 21. Matter, i. 219.



while the religion lost its purely moral cast, and assumed the character of a speculative theogony.

Ephesus is the scene of the first collision between Christianity and Orientalism, of which we can trace any authentic record. Ephesus, we have before described as the great emporium of magic arts, and the place where the unwieldy allegory of the East lingered in the bosom of the more elegant Grecian Humanism (1). Here the Greek, the Oriental, the Jew, the philosopher, the magician, the follower of John the Baptist, the teacher of Christianity, were no doubt encouraged to settle by the peaceful opulence of the inhabitants, and the constant influx of strangers, under the proudly indifferent protection of the municipal authorities and the Roman government. In Ephesus according to universal tradition, survived the last of the Apostles, and here the last of the Gospels — some have supposed the latest of the writings of the new Testament, — appeared in the midst of his struggle with the foreign elements of conflicting systems. This Gospel was written, we conceive, not against any peculiar sect or individual, but to arrest the spirit of Orientalism which was working into the essence of Christianity, destroying its beautiful simplicity, and threatening altogether to change both its design and its effects upon mankind. In some points, it necessarily spoke the language, which was common alike, though not precisely with the same meaning, to the Platonism of the West and the Theogonism of the East; but its sense was different and peculiar. It kept the moral and religious, if not altogether distinct from the physical notions, yet clearly and invariably predominant. While it appropriated the well-known and almost universal term, the Logos, or Word of God, to the divine author of Christianity, and even adopted some of the imagery from the hypothesis of conflicting light and darkness; yet it altogether rejected all the wild cosmogonical speculations on the formation of the world; it was silent on that elementary distinction of the Eastern creed, the separation of matter from the etherial mind. The union of the soul with the Deity, though in the writings of John it takes something of a mystic tone, is not the pantheistic absorption into the parent Deity; it is an union by the aspiration of the pious heart, the conjunction by pure and holy love with the Deity, who, to the extatic moral affection of the adorer, is himself pure love. It insists not on abstraction from matter, but from sin, from hatred, from all fierce and corrupting passions; its new life is active as well as meditative; a social principle, which incorporates together all pure and holy men, and conjoins them with their federal head, Christ, the image and representative of the God of Love; it is no principle

Ephesus.

St. John.

H.  
Gospel.

(1) The Temple of Diana was the triumph of pure Grecian architecture: but her statue was not that of the divine Huntress, like that twin sister of the Belvidere Apollo in the gallery at

Paris; she was the Diana multumama, the emblematic impersonation of all-productive, all-nutritive, Nature.

of isolation in solitary and rapturous meditation; it is a moral not an imaginative purity.

Among the opponents to the holy and sublime Christianity of St. John, during his residence at Ephesus, the names of the Nicolaitans and of Cerinthus alone have survived (1). Of the tenets of the former, and the author of the doctrine, nothing precise is known; but the indignant language with which they are alluded to in the Sacred Writings implies that they were not merely hostile to the abstract doctrines, but also to the moral effects of the Gospel. Nor does it appear quite clear that the Nicolaitans were a distinct and organised sect.

Cerinthus. Cerinthus was the first of whose tenets we have any distinct statement, who, admitting the truth of Christianity, attempted to incorporate with it foreign and Oriental tenets (2). Cerinthus was of Jewish descent, and educated in the Judæo-Platonic school of Alexandria (3). His system was a singular and, apparently, incongruous fusion of Jewish, Christian, and Oriental notions. He did not, like Simon or Menander, invest himself in a sacred and mysterious character, though he pretended to angelic revelations (4). Like all the Orientals, his imagination was haunted with the notion of the malignity of matter; and his object seems to have been to keep both the primal Being and the Christ uninfected with its contagion. The Creator of the material world, therefore, was a secondary being—an angel or angels; as Cerinthus seems to have adhered to the Jewish, and not adopted the Oriental language (5). But his national and hereditary reverence for the law withheld him from that bold and hostile step which was taken by most of the other Gnostic sects, to which, no doubt, the general animosity to the Jews in Syria and Egypt concurred,—the identification of the God of the Jewish covenant with the inferior and malignant author of the material creation. He retained, according to one account, his reverence for the rites, the ceremonies, the law, and the prophets, of Judaism (6), to which he was probably reconciled by the allegoric interpretations of Philo. The Christ, in his theory, was of a higher order than those secondary and subordinate beings who had presided over the older world. But, with the jealousy of all the

(1) General tradition derived the Nicolaitans from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons. Acts, vi. 5. Eusebius (Eccl. Hist. i. iii. c. 29.) relates a story that Nicolas, accused of being jealous of his beautiful wife, offered her in matrimony to whoever chose to take her. His followers, on this example, founded the tenet of promiscuous concubinage. Wetstein, with whom Michaelis and Rosenmüller are inclined to agree, supposed that Nicolas was a translation of the Hebrew word Bileam, both signifying, in their respective languages, the subduer or the destroyer of the people. Michaelis, Eichhorn, and Storr, suppose, therefore, that it was the name rather of a sect than an individual, and the same with those

mentioned 2 Pet. ii, 10. 13. 18.; iii. 3.; Jud. 8. 16. See Rosenmüller on Rev. ii. 6.

(2) See Mosheim, de Rebus ante C. M. p. 199. Matter, i. 221.

(3) Theodoret, ii. c. 3.

(4) Eusebius, E. H. iii. 28., from Cains the presbyter, *τερατολογίας ἡμῶν ὡς δι' ἀγγέλων αὐτῷ δεδειγμέναις ψευδόμενος*.

(5) Epiphanius Hær. viii. 28. According to Irenæus, a virtute quadam valde separatâ, et distante ab eâ principatitate quæ est super universa et ignorante eam qui est super omnia Deum. Iren. i. 25.

(6) Inferior angels to those of the law inspired the prophets.

Gnostic sects, lest the pure emanation from the Father should be unnecessarily contaminated by too intimate a conjunction with a material and mortal form, he relieved him from the degradation of a human birth, by supposing that the Christ descended on the man Jesus at his baptism; and from the ignominy of a mortal death, by making him reascend before that crisis, having accomplished his mission of making known "the Unknown Father," the pure and primal Being, of whom the worshippers of the Creator of the material universe, and of the Jehovah of the Jews, were alike ignorant. But the most inconsequential part of the doctrine of Cerinthus was his retention of the Jewish doctrine of the millennium. It must, indeed, have been purified from some of its grosser and more sensual images; for the Christos, the immaterial emanation from the Father was to preside during its long period of harmony and peace (1).

The later Gnostics were bolder but more consistent, innovators on the simple scheme of Christianity. It was not till the second century that the combination of Orientalism with Christianity was matured into the more perfect Gnosticism. This was, perhaps, at its height from about the year 120 to 140. In all the great cities of the East, in which Christianity had established its most flourishing communities, sprung up this rival, which aspired to a still higher degree of knowledge than was revealed in the Gospel, and boasted that it soared almost as much above the vulgar Christianity as the vulgar Paganism. Antioch, where the first church of the Christians had been opened, beheld the followers of Saturninus withdrawing, in a proud assurance of their superiority, from the common brotherhood of believers, and insulating themselves as the gifted possessors of still higher spiritual secrets. Edessa, whose king very early Christian fable had exalted into a personal correspondent with the Saviour, rung with the mystic hymns of Bardesanes; to the countless religious and philosophical factions of Alexandria were added those of Basilides and Valentinus; until a still more unscrupulous and ardent enthusiast, Marcion of Pontus, threw aside in disdain the whole existing religion of the Gospel, remodelled the sacred books, and established himself as the genuine hierophant of the real Christian mysteries.

Later  
Gnostics.

Gnosticism, though very different from Christianity, was of a sublime and imposing character, as an imaginative creed, and not more unreasonable than the other attempts of human reason to solve the inexplicable secret, the origin of evil. Though variously modified, the systems of the different teachers were essentially the same. The primal Deity remained aloof in his unapproachable ma-

The pri-  
mal Deity  
of Gnosti-  
cism.

(1) Cerinthus was considered by some early writers the author of the Apocalypse, because that work appeared to contain his grosser doctrine of the millennial reign of Christ. Dionysius apud Euseb. iii. 282; vii. 25.



The Pleroma. jesty; the unspeakable, the ineffable, the nameless, the self-existing (1). The Pleroma, the fulness of the Godhead, expanded itself in still outspreading circles, and approached, till it comprehended, the universe. From the Pleroma emanated all spiritual being, and to him they were to return and mingle again in indissoluble unity. By their entanglement in malign and hostile matter—the source of moral as well as physical evil—all outwardly existing beings had degenerated from their high origin; their redemption from this foreign bondage, their restoration to purity and peace in the bosom of Divinity, the universal harmony of all immaterial existence, thus resolved again into the Pleroma, was the merciful design of the Æon Christ, who had for this purpose invaded and subdued the foreign and hostile provinces of the Energy, or Deity of matter.

The Æon Christ.

Malignity of matter.

In all the Oriental sects, this primary principle, the malignity of matter, haunted the imagination; and to this principle every tenet must be accommodated. The sublimest doctrines of the Old Testament—the creative omnipotence, the sovereignty, the providence of God, as well as the grosser and anthropomorphic images, in which the acts and passions, and even the form of man, are assigned to the Deity,—fell under the same remorseless proscription. It was pollution, it was degradation to the pure and elementary spirit, to mingle with, to approximate, to exercise even the remotest influence over, the material world. The creation of the visible universe was made over, according to all, to a secondary, with most, to a hostile Demiurge. The hereditary reverence which had modified the opinions of Cerinthus, with regard to the Jehovah of his fathers, had no hold on the Syrian and Egyptian speculatists. They fearlessly pursued their system to its consequences, and the whole of the Old Testament was abandoned to the inspiration of an inferior and evil dæmon; the Jews were left in exclusive possession of their national Deity, whom the Gnostic Christians disdained to acknowledge as bearing any resemblance to the abstract, remote, and impassive Spirit. To them, the mission of Christ revealed a Deity altogether unknown in the dark ages of a world which was the creation and the domain of an inferior being. They would not, like the philosophising Jews, take refuge in allegory to explain the too material images of the works of the Deity in the act of creation, and his subsequent rest; the intercourse with man in the garden of Eden; the trees of knowledge and of life; the Serpent, and the Fall; they rejected the whole as altogether extraneous to Christianity, belonging to another world, with which the God revealed by Christ had no concern or relation. If they condescended to discuss

Rejection of the Old Testament.

(1) The Author of the Apostolic Constitutions asserts, as the first principle of all the early heresies, τὸν μὲν παντοκράτορα Θεὸν βλάσφημεῖν, ἀγνωστον δοξάζειν, καὶ μὴ

εἶναι Πατέρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, μηδὲ τοῦ κόσμου δημιουργὸν, ἀλλ' ἄλεκτον, ἄρρητον, ἀκατονομαστον, αὐτογένεθλον Lib. vi. c. 10.

the later Jewish history, it was merely to confirm their preconceived notions. The apparent investiture of the Jehovah with the state and attributes of a temporal sovereign, the imperfection of the law, the barbarity of the people, the bloody wars in which they were engaged,—in short, whatever in Judaism was irreconcilable with a purely intellectual and morally perfect system, argued its origin from an imperfect and secondary author.

But some tenets of primitive Christianity came no less into direct collision with the leading principles of Orientalism. The human nature of Jesus was too deeply impressed upon all the Gospel history, and perplexed the whole school, as well the precursors of Gnosticism as the more perfect Gnostics. His birth and death bore equal evidence to the unspiritualised materialism of his mortal body. They seized with avidity the distinction between the divine and human nature; but the Christ, the *Æon*, which emanated from the pure and primal Deity, as yet unknown in the world of the inferior creator, must be relieved as far as possible from the degrading and contaminating association with the mortal Jesus. The simpler hypothesis of the union of the two natures, mingled up, too closely, according to their views, the ill-assorted companions. The human birth of Jesus, though guarded by the virginity of his mother, was still offensive to their subtler and more fastidious purity. The Christ, therefore, the Emanation from the Pleroma, descended upon the man Jesus at his baptism. The death of Jesus was a still more serious cause of embarrassment. They seem never to have entertained the notion of an expiatory sacrifice; and the connection of the ethereal mind with the pains and sufferings of a carnal body, was altogether repulsive to their strongest prejudices. Before the death, therefore, of Jesus, the Christ had broken off his temporary association with the perishable body of Jesus, and surrendered it to the impotent resentment of Pilate and of the Jews; or, according to the theory of the Docetæ, adopted by almost all the Gnostic sects, the whole union with the material human form was an illusion upon the senses of men; it was but an apparent human being, an impassive phantom, which *seemed* to undergo all the insults and the agony of the cross.

Of some  
parts of  
the New.

Such were the general tenets of the Gnostic sects, emanating from one simple principle. But the details of their cosmogony, their philosophy, and their religion, were infinitely modified by local circumstances, by the more or less fanciful genius of their founders, and by the stronger infusion of the different elements of Platonism, Kabbalism, or that which, in its stricter sense, may be called Orientalism. The number of circles, or emanations, or procreations, which intervened between the spiritual and the material world; the nature and the rank of the Creator of that material world; his more or less close identification with the Jehovah of Judaism;

the degree of malignity which they attributed to the latter; the office and the nature of the Christos,—these were open points, upon which they admitted or, at least, assumed, the utmost latitude.

Saturni-  
nus.

The earliest of the more distinguished Gnostics is Saturninus, who is represented as a pupil of Menander, the successor of Simon Magus (1). But this Samaritan sect was always in direct hostility with Christianity, while Saturninus departed less from the Christian system than most of the wilder and more imaginative teachers of Gnosticism. The strength of the Christian party in Antioch may in some degree have overawed and restrained the aberrations of his fancy. Saturninus did not altogether exclude the primal spiritual Being from all concern or interest in the material world. For the Creator of the visible universe, he assumed the seven great angels, which the later Jews had probably borrowed, though with different powers, from the seven Amschaspands of Zoroastrianism. Neither were these angels essentially evil, nor was the domain on which they exercised their creative power altogether surrendered to the malignity of matter; it was a kind of debateable ground between the powers of evil and of good. The historian of Gnosticism has remarked the singular beauty of the fiction regarding the creation of man. "The angels tried their utmost efforts to form man; but there arose under their creative influence only 'a worm creeping upon the earth.' God, condescending to interpose, sent down his Spirit, which breathed into the reptile the living soul of man." It is not quite easy to connect with this view of the origin of man the tenets of Saturninus, that the human kind was divided into two distinct races, the good and the bad. Whether the latter became so from receiving a feebler and less influential portion of the divine Spirit, or whether they were a subsequent creation of Satan, who assumes the station of the Ahriman of the Persian system (2). But the descent of Christ was to separate finally these two conflicting races. He was to rescue the good from the predominant power of the wicked; to destroy the kingdom of the spirits of evil, who, emanating in countless numbers from Satan their chief, waged a fatal war against the good; and to elevate them far above the power of the chief of the angels, the God of the Jews, for whose imperfect laws were to be substituted the purifying principles of Asceticism, by which the children of light, were re-united to the source and origin of light. The Christ himself was the Supreme Power of God, immaterial, incorporeal, formless, but assuming the *semblance* of man; and his followers were, as far as possible, to detach them-

(1) On Saturninus, see Irenæus, i. 22.; Euseb. iv. 7.; Epiphani. Hær. 23.; Theodoret, Hær. Fab. lib. iii.; Tertullian de Animâ, 23.; de Præscrip. cont. Hær. c. 36. Of the moderns, Mosheim, p. 336.; Matter, i. 276.

(2) The latter opinion is that of Mosheim. M. Matter, on the contrary, says,—“Satan n'a pourtant pas créé les hommes, et les a trouvés tout faits: il s'en est emparé; c'est là sa sphère d'activité et la limite de sa puissance.” p. 285.



selves from their corporeal bondage, and assimilate themselves to his spiritual being. Marriage was the invention of Satan and his evil spirits, or at best, of the great angel, the God of the Jews, in order to continue the impure generation. The elect were to abstain from propagating a race of darkness and imperfection. Whether Saturninus, with the Essenes, maintained this total abstinence as the especial privilege of the higher class of his followers, and permitted to the less perfect the continuation of their kind, or whether he abandoned altogether this perilous and degrading office to the wicked, his system appears incomplete, as it seems to yield up as desperate the greater part of the human race; to perpetuate the dominion of evil; and to want the general and final absorption of all existence into the purity and happiness of the primal Being.

Alexandria, the centre, as it were, of the speculative and intellectual activity of the Roman world, to which ancient Egypt, Asia, Palestine, and Greece, furnished the mingled population of her streets, and the conflicting opinions of her schools, gave birth to the two succeeding, and most widely disseminated sects of Gnosticism, those of Basilides and Valentinus.

Alexan-  
dria.

Basilides was a Syrian by birth, and by some is supposed to have been a scholar of Menander, at the same time with Saturninus. He claimed, however, Glaucias, a disciple of St. Peter, as his original teacher; and his doctrines assumed the boastful title of the Secret Traditions of the great Apostle. He also had some ancient prophecies, those of Cham and Barkaph (1), peculiar to his sect. According to another authority, he was a Persian; but this may have originated from the Zoroastrian cast of his primary tenets (2). From the Zendavesta, Basilides drew the eternal hostility of mind and matter, of light and darkness; but the Zoroastrian doctrine seems to have accommodated itself to the kindred systems of Egypt. In fact, the Gnosticism of Basilides appears to have been a fusion of the ancient sacerdotal religion of Egypt with the angelic and dæmonic theory of Zoroaster. Basilides did not, it seems, maintain his one abstract unapproachable Deity far above the rest of the universe, but connected him, by a long and insensible gradation of intellectual developments or manifestations, with the visible and material world. From the Father proceeded seven beings, who together with him made up an ogdoad; constituted the first scale of intellectual beings, and inhabited the highest heaven, the purest intellectual sphere. According to their names—Mind, Reason, Intelligence (*Φρόνησις*), Wisdom, Power, Justice, and Peace,—they are merely, in our language, the attributes of the Deity, impersonated in this system.

Basilides.

(1) Irenæus differs in his view of the Basilidian theory, from the remains of the Basilidian books appealed to by Clement of Alexandria, Strom. vi. p. 375. 795.; Theodoret, Hæret. Fabul. 1. 2.; Euseb. E. H. iv. 7. Basilides publish-

ed twenty-four volumes of exegetica, or interpretations of his doctrines.

(2) Clemens, Stromata, vi. 642 Euseb. H. E. iv. 7.

The number of these primary Æons is the same as the Persian system of the Deity and the seven Amshaspands, and the Sephiroth of the Kabbala, and, probably, as far as that abstruse subject is known, of the ancient Egyptian theology (1).

The seven primary effluxes of the Deity went on producing and multiplying, each forming its own realm or sphere, till they reached the number of 365 (2). The total number formed the mystical Abraxas (3), the legend which is found on so many of the ancient gems, the greater part of which are of Gnostic origin; though as much of this theory was from the doctrines of ancient Egypt, not only the mode of expressing their tenets by symbolic inscriptions, but even the inscription itself, may be originally Egyptian (4). The lowest of these worlds bordered on the realm of matter. The first confusion and invasion of the hostile elements took place. At length the chief angel of this sphere, on the verge of intellectual being, was seized with a desire of reducing the confused mass to order. With his assistant angels, he became the Creator. Though the form was of a higher origin, it was according to the idea of Wisdom, who, with the Deity, formed part of the first and highest ogdoad. Basilides professed the most profound reverence for divine Providence; and in Alexandria, the God of the Jews, softened off, as it were, and harmonised to the philosophic sentiment by the school of Philo, was looked upon in a less hostile light than by the Syrian and Asiatic school. The East lent its system of guardian angels, and the assistant angels of the Demiurge were the spiritual rulers of the nations, while the Creator himself was that of the Jews. Man was formed of a triple nature. His corporeal form of brute and malignant matter; his animal soul, the Psychic principle, which he received from the Demiurge; the higher and purer spirit, with which he was endowed from a loftier region. This pure and ethereal spirit was to be emancipated from its impure companionship: and Egypt, or rather, the whole East, lent the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, in order to carry this stranger upon earth through the gradations of successive purification, till it was readmitted to its parent heaven.

Basilides, in the Christian doctrine which he interwove with this

(1) See Matter, vol. ii. p. 5—37.

(2) It is difficult to suppose that this number, either as originally borrowed from the Egyptian theology, or as invented by Basilides, had not some astronomical reference.

(3) Irenæus, i. 23. See in M. Matter, ii. 49, 54, the countless interpretations of this mysterious word. We might add others to those collected by his industry. M. Matter adopts, though with some doubt, the opinion of M. Bellermin and M. Munier. Le premier de ces écrivains explique le mot "Abraxas" par le kopte, qui est incontestablement à l'ancienne langue d'Égypte ce que la grec moderne est au langage de l'ancienne Grèce. La syllabe "sadsch," que les Grecs ont dû

convertir en σαζ, ou sas, ou σαζ, n'ayant pu exprimer la dernière lettre de cette syllabe, que par les lettres X, Σ, ou Z, signifierait *parole*, et "abrak" *beni, saint, adorable*, en sorte que le mot "Abraxas" tout entier, offrirait le sens de *parole sacrée*. M. Munier ne s'éloigne de cette interprétation que pour les syllabes "abrak" qu'il prend pour le mot kopte "berra" *nouveau*, ce qui donne à l'ensemble le sens de *parole nouveau*. Matter, ii. 40

(4) See, in the supplement to M. Matter's work, a very curious collection of these Egyptian and Egypto-Grecian medals; and a work of Dr Walsh on these coins. Compare likewise, Reuven's Lettres à M. Letronne, particularly p. 23.

imaginative theory, followed the usual Gnostic course (1). The Christ, the first *Æon* of the Deity, descended on the man Jesus at his baptism; but, by a peculiar tenet of their own, the Basilidians rescued even the man Jesus from the degrading sufferings of the cross. Simon the Cyrenian was changed into the form of Jesus; on him the enemies of the crucified wasted their wrath, while Jesus stood aloof in the form of Simon, and mocked their impotent malice. Their moral perceptions must have been singularly blinded by their passion for their favourite tenet, not to discern how much they lowered their Saviour by making him thus render up an innocent victim as his own substitute.

Valentinus appears to have been considered the most formidable and dangerous of this school of Gnostics (2). He was twice excommunicated, and twice received again into the bosom of the church. He did not confine his dangerous opinions to the school of Alexandria; he introduced the wild Oriental speculations into the more peaceful West; taught at Rome; and a third time being expelled from the Christian society, retired to Cyprus, an island where the Jews were formerly numerous, till the fatal insurrection in the time of Hadrian; and where probably the Oriental philosophy might not find an unwelcome reception, on the border, as it were, of Europe and Asia (3).

Valentinus annihilated the complexity of pre-existing heavens, which, perhaps, connected the system of Basilides with that of ancient Egypt, and did not interpose the same infinite number of gradations between the primal Deity and the material world. He descended much more rapidly into the sphere of Christian images and Christian language, or rather, he carried up many of the Christian notions and terms, and enshrined them in the *Plerona*, the region of spiritual and inaccessible light. The fundamental tenet of Orientalism, the incomprehensibility of the Great Supreme, was the essential principle of his system, and was represented in terms pregnant with mysterious sublimity. The first Father was called *Bythos*, the Abyss, the Depth, the Unfathomable, who dwelt alone in inscrutable and ineffable height, with his own first Conception, his *Ennoia*, who bore the emphatic and awful name of Silence. The first development or self-manifestation was *Mind* (*Nous*), whose appropriate consort was *Aletheia* or Truth. These formed the first great quaternion, the highest scale of being. From *Mind* and *Truth* proceeded the *Word* and *Life* (*Logos* and *Zoe*); their manifestations were *Man* and the *Church*, *Anthropos* and *Ecclesia*, and so

Valenti-  
nus.

(1) Irenæus, i. 29., compared with the other authors cited above.

(2) Irenæus, *Hæc. v.* Clemens., *Alex. Strom.* Origen, *de Princip. contra Celsum*. The author of the *Didascalia Orientalis*, at the end of the works of Clement of Alexandria. Tertullian ad-

versus Valentin. Theodoret, *Fab. Hæc. i. 7.* Epiphanius, *Hæc. 31.*

(3) Tertull. *advers. Valentin.*, c. 4. Epiphanius, *Massuet. (Diss. in Iren. p. 10. 14.)* doubts this part of the history of Valentinus.



the first ogdoad was complete. From the Word and Life proceeded ten more Æons ; but these seem, from their names, rather qualities of the Supreme ; at least the five masculine names, for the feminine appear to imply some departure from the pure elementary and unimpassioned nature of the primal Parent. The males are—Buthios, profound, with his consort Mixis, conjunction ; Ageratos, that grows not old, with Henosis or union ; Autophyes, self-subsistent, with Hedone, pleasure ; Akinetos, motionless, with Syncrasis, commixture ; the Only Begotten and the Blessed. The offspring of Man and the Church were twelve, and in the females we seem to trace the shadowy prototypes of the Christian graces : — the Paraclete and Faith ; the Paternal and Hope ; the Maternal and Charity ; the Ever-intelligent and Prudence ; Ecclesiasticos (a term apparently expressive of church union) and Blessedness ; Will and Wisdom (Theletos and Sophia).

These thirty Æons dwelt alone within the sacred and inviolable circle of the Pleroma : they were all, in one sense, manifestations of the Deity, all purely intellectual, an universe apart. But the peace of this metaphysical hierarchy was disturbed, and here we are presented with a noble allegory, which, as it were, brings these abstract conceptions within the reach of human sympathy. The last of the dodecachy which sprung from Man and the Church was Sophia or Wisdom. Without intercourse with her consort Will, Wisdom was seized with an irresistible passion for that knowledge and intimate union with the primal Father, the unfathomable, which was the sole privilege of the first-born, Mind. She would comprehend the incomprehensible : love was the pretext, but temerity the motive. Pressing onward under this strong impulse, she would have reached the remote sanctuary, and would finally have been absorbed into the primal Essence, had she not encountered Horus (the impersonated boundary between knowledge and the Deity). At the persuasion of this “ liminary cherub ” (to borrow Milton’s words), she acknowledged the incomprehensibility of the Father, returned in humble acquiescence to her lowlier sphere, and allayed the passion begot of wonder. But the harmony of the intellectual world was destroyed ; a redemption, a restoration, was necessary ; and (for now Valentinus must incorporate the Christian system into his own) from the first Æon, the divine Mind, proceeded Christ and the Holy Ghost. Christ communicated to the listening Æons the mystery of the imperishable nature of the Father, and their own procession from him ; the delighted Æons commemorated the restoration of the holy peace, by each contributing his most splendid gift to form Jesus, encircled with his choir of angels.

Valentinus did not descend immediately from his domain of metaphysical abstraction ; he interposed an intermediate sphere between that and the material world. The desire or passion of Sophia, im-

personated, became an inferior Wisdom ; she was an outcast from the Pleroma, and lay floating in the dim and formless chaos without. The Christos in mercy gave her form and substance ; she preserved, as it were, some fragrance of immortality. Her passion was still strong for higher things, for the light which she could not apprehend ; and she incessantly attempted to enter the forbidden circle of the Pleroma, but was again arrested by Horus, who uttered the mystic name of Jao. Sadly she returned to the floating elements of inferior being ; she was surrendered to Passion, and with his assistance produced the material world. The tears which she shed, at the thought of her outcast condition, formed the humid element ; her smiles, when she thought of the region of glory, the light ; her fears and her sorrows, the grosser elements. Christ descended no more to her assistance, but sent Jesus, the Paraclete, the Saviour, with his angels ; and with his aid, all substance was divided into material, animal, and spiritual. The spiritual, however, altogether emanated from the light of her divine assistant ; the first formation of the animal (the Psychic) was the Demiurge, the Creator, the Saviour, the Father, the king of all that was consubstantial with himself, and finally, the material, of which he was only the Demiurge or Creator. Thus were formed the seven intermediate spheres, of which the Demiurge and his assistant angels (the seven again of the Persian system), with herself, made up a second ogdoad,—the image and feeble reflection of the former ; Wisdom representing the primal Parent ; the Demiurge the divine Mind, though he was ignorant of his mother, more ignorant than Satan himself ; the other sidereal angels, the rest of the Æons. By the Demiurge the lower world was formed. Mankind consisted of three classes : the spiritual, who are enlightened with the divine ray from Jesus ; the animal or psychic, the offspring and kindred of the Demiurge ; the material, the slaves and associates of Satan, the prince of the material world. They were represented, as it were, by Seth, Abel, and Cain. This organisation or distribution of mankind harmonised with tolerable facility with the Christian scheme. But by multiplying his spiritual beings, Valentinus embarrassed himself in the work of redemption or restoration of this lower and still degenerating world. With him, it was the Christos, or rather a faint image and reflection (for each of his intelligences multiplied themselves by this reflection of their being), who passed through the material form of the Virgin, like water through a tube. It was Jesus who descended upon the Saviour at his baptism, in the shape of the dove ; and Valentinus admitted the common fantastic theory, with regard to the death of Jesus. At the final consummation, the latent fire would burst out (here Valentinus admitted the common theory of Zoroastrianism and Christianity) and consume the very scoria of matter ; the material men, with their prince, would utterly perish in the conflagra-

tion. Those of the animal, the Psychic, purified by the divine ray imparted by the Redeemer, would, with their parent, the Demiurge, occupy the intermediate realm, there were the just men made perfect, while the great mother Sophia, would at length be admitted into the Pleroma or intellectual sphere.

Bard-  
esanes.

Gnosticism was pure poetry, and Bardesanes was the poet of Gnosticism (1). For above two centuries, the hymns of this remarkable man, and those of his son Harmonius, enchanted the ears of the Syrian Christians, till they were expelled by the more orthodox raptures of Ephraem, the Syrian. Among the most remarkable circumstances relating to Bardesanes, who lived at the court of Abgar, king of Edessa, was his inquiry into the doctrines of the ancient Gymnosophists of India, which thus connected, as it were, the remotest East with the great family of religious speculatists; yet the theory of Bardesanes was more nearly allied to the Persian or the Chaldean; and the language of his poetry was in that fervent and amatory strain which borrows the warmest metaphors of human passion, to kindle the soul to divine love (2).

Bardesanes deserved the glory, though he did not suffer the pains, of martyrdom. Pressed by the philosopher Apollonius, in the name of his master, the Emperor Verus, to deny Christianity, he replied, "I fear not death, which I shall not escape by yielding to the wishes of the Emperor." Bardesanes had opposed with vigorous hostility the system of Marcion (3), he afterwards appears to have seceded or, outwardly conforming, to have aspired in private to become the head of another Gnostic sect, which, in contradistinction to those of Saturninus and Valentinus, may be called the Mesopotamian or Babylonian. With him, the primal Deity dwelt alone with his consort, his primary thought or conception. Their first offsprings, Æons, or emanations, were Christ and the Holy Ghost, who, in his system was feminine, and nearly allied to the Sophia, or Wisdom, of other theories; the four elements,—the dry earth, and the water, the fire, and the air,—who make up the celestial ogdoad. The Son and his partner, the Spirit or Wisdom, with the assistance of the elements, made the worlds, which they surrendered to the government of the seven planetary spirits and the sun and moon, the visible types of the primal union. Probably these, as in the other systems, made the second ogdoad; and these, with other astral influences, borrowed from the Tsabaism of the region, the twelve signs of the zodiac, and the thirty-six Decani, as he called the rulers of the 360 days, governed the world of man. And here Bardesanes became

(1) Valentinus, according to Tertullian, wrote psalms (*de Carne Christi*, c. 20.); his disciple Marcus explained his system in verse, and introduced the Æons as speaking. Compare Hahn, p. 26. Bardesanes wrote 150 psalms, the number of those of David.

(2) Theodoret, *Hæret. Fab.* 209.

(3) According to Eusebius, *E. H.* v. 38., Bardesanes approached much nearer to orthodoxy, though he still "bore some tokens of the sable streams."



implicated with the eternal dispute about destiny and freewill, on which he wrote a separate treatise, and which entered into and coloured all his speculations (1). But the Wisdom which was the consort of the Son was of an inferior nature to that which dwelt with the Father. She was the Sophia Achamoth, and, faithless to her spiritual partner, she had taken delight in assisting the Demiurge in the creation of the visible world ; but in all her wanderings and estrangement, she felt a constant and empassioned desire for perfect reunion with her first consort. He assisted her in her course of purification ; revealed to her his more perfect light, on which she gazed with reanimating love ; and the second wedding of these long estranged powers, in the presence of the parent Deity, and all the Æons and angels, formed the subject of one of his most ardent and rapturous hymns. With her, arose into the Pleroma those souls which partook of her celestial nature, and are rescued, by the descent of the Christ, according to the usual Gnostic theory, from their imprisonment in the world of matter.

Yet all these theorists preserved some decent show of respect for the Christian faith, and aimed at an amicable reconciliation between their own wild theories and the simpler Gospel. It is not improbable that most of their leaders were actuated by the ambition of uniting the higher and more intellectual votaries of the older Paganism with the Christian community ; the one by an accommodation with the Egyptian, the others, with the Syrian or Chaldean ; as, in later times, the Alexandrian school, with the Grecian or Platonic Paganism ; and expected to conciliate all who would not scruple to engraft the few tenets of Christianity, which they reserved inviolate, upon their former belief. They aspired to retain all that was dazzling, vast, and imaginative in the cosmogonical systems of the East, and rejected all that was humiliating or offensive to the common sentiment in Christianity. The Jewish character of the Messiah gave way to a purely immaterial notion of a celestial Redeemer ; the painful realities of his life and death were softened off into fantastic appearances ; they yet adopted as much of the Christian language as they could mould to their views, and even disguised or mitigated their contempt or animosity to Judaism. But Marcion of Pontus (2) disclaimed all these conciliatory and temporising measures, either with Pagan, Jew, or evangelic Christian (3). With Marcion, all was hard, cold, implacable antagonism. At once a severe rationalist and a strong enthusiast, Marcion pressed the leading doctrine of the malignity of matter to its extreme speculative and practical consequences. His Creator, his providential Governor, the God of the

Marcion of  
Pontus.

(1) He seems to have had an esoteric and an exoteric doctrine. Hahn, p. 22., on the authority of St. Ephrem. Compare Hahn, *Bardesanes Gnosticus Syrorum primus Hymnologus*.

(2) Marcion was son of the Bishop of Sinope.

(3) On Marcion, see chiefly the five books of Tertullian adv. Marcenes ; the *Historian of Heresies*, Irenæus, i. 27. ; Epiphanius, 42. ; Theodoret, i. 24. ; Origen contra Cels. ; Clem. Alex. iii. 425. St. Ephrem, *Orat.* 14. p. 468.

Jews,—weak, imperfect, enthralled in matter,—was the opposite to the true God : the only virtue of men was the most rigid and painful abstinence. His doctrine proscribed all animal food but fish : it surpassed the most austere of the other Christian communities in its proscription of the amusements and pleasures of life ; it rejected marriage, from hostility to the Demiurge, whose kingdom it would not increase by peopling it with new beings enslaved to matter, to glut death with food (1). The fundamental principle of Marcion's doctrine was unfolded in his Antitheses, the Contrasts, in which he arrayed against each other the Supreme God and the Demiurge, the God of the Jews, the Old and New Testament, the Law and the Gospel (2). The one was perfect, pure, beneficent, passionless ; the other, though not unjust by nature, infected by matter,—subject to all the passions of man,—cruel, changeable ; the New Testament, especially, as remodelled by Marcion, was holy, wise, amiable ; the Old Testament, the Law, barbarous, inhuman, contradictory, and detestable. On the plundering of the Egyptians, on the massacre of the Canaanites, on every metaphor which ascribed the actions and sentiments of men to the Deity, Marcion enlarged with contemptuous superiority, and contrasted it with the tone of the Gospel. It was to rescue mankind from the tyranny of this inferior and hostile deity, that the Supreme manifested himself in Jesus Christ. This manifestation took place by his sudden appearance in the synagogue in Capernaum ; for Marcion swept away with remorseless hand all the earlier incidents in the Gospels. But the Messiah which was revealed in Christ was directly the opposite to that announced by the Prophets of the Jews, and of their God. He made no conquests ; he was not the Immanuel ; he was not the son of David ; he came not to restore the temporal kingdom of Israel. His doctrines were equally opposed : he demanded not an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth ; but where one smote the right cheek, to turn the other. He demanded no sacrifices but that of the pure heart ; he enjoined not the sensual and indecent practice of multiplying the species ; he proscribed marriage. The God of the Jews, trembling for his authority, armed himself against the celestial invader of his territory ; he succeeded, in the *seeming* execution of Christ upon the cross, who, by his death, rescued the souls of the true believers from the bondage of the law ; descended to the lower regions, where he rescued, not the pious and holy patriarchs, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Jacob, Moses, David, or Solomon,—these were the adherents of the Demiurge or material creator,—but his implacable enemies, such as Cain and Esau. After the ascension of the Redeemer to heaven, the God of

(1) ὁ δὲ λόγος μὴ βουλόμενος τὸν κόσμον τὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ γενομένον συμπληροῦν, ἀπέχεσθαι γάμου βούλονται — Clem. Alex. Strom. iii. 3. μηδὲ ἀντιστάειν τῷ κόσμῳ δυστυχήσαντας ἐτέ-

ρους, μηδὲ ἐπιχρηγεῖν τῷ θανάτῳ τρέφειν. Ch. vi.

(2) Marcion is accused by Rhodon apud Euseb. H. E. v. 13., of introducing two principles,—the Zoroastrian theory.

the Jews was to restore his subjects to their native land; and his temporal reign was to commence over his faithful but inferior subjects.

The Gospel of Marcion was that of St. Luke, adapted, by many omissions, and some alterations, to his theory. Every allusion to, every metaphor from, marriage was carefully erased, and every passage amended or rejected which could in any way implicate the pure deity with the material world (1).

These were the chief of the Gnostic sects; but they spread out into almost infinitely diversified subdivisions, distinguished by some peculiar tenet or usage. The Carpocratians were avowed Eclectics; they worshipped, as benefactors of the human race, the images of Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and Jesus Christ, as well as that of their own founder. By this school were received, possibly were invented, many of the astrologic or theurgic books attributed to Zoroaster and other ancient sages. The Jewish Scriptures were the works of inferior angels; they received only the Gospel of St. Matthew. The supreme, unknown, uncreated Deity, was the Monad; the visible world was the creation, the domain of inferior beings. But their system was much simpler, and, in some respects, rejecting generally the system of Æons or Emanations, approached much nearer to Christianity than most of the other Gnostics. The contest of Jesus Christ, who was the son of Joseph, according to their system, was a purely moral one. It revived the Oriental notion of the pre-existence of the soul: that of Jesus had a clearer and more distinct reminiscence of the original knowledge (the Gnosis), and wisdom of their celestial state; and by communicating these notions to mankind, elevated them to the same superiority over the mundane deities. This perfection consisted in faith and charity, perhaps likewise in the extatic contemplation of the Monad. Every thing except faith and charity,—all good works, all observances of human laws, which were established by mundane authority,—were exterior, and more than indifferent. Hence, they were accused of recommending a community of property, and of women,—inferences which would be drawn from their avowed contempt for all human laws. They were accused, probably without justice, of following out these speculative opinions into practice. Of all heretics, none have borne a worse name than the followers of Carpocrates and his son and successor, Epiphanes (2).

Varieties  
of Gnosti-  
cism.

(1) This Gospel has been put together, according to the various authorities, especially of Tertullian, by M. Jahn. It is reprinted in the *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, by Thilo, of which one volume only has appeared. Among the remarkable alterations of the Gospels, which most strongly characterise his system, was that of the text so beautifully descriptive of the providence of God,—which “maketh his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain

on the just and the unjust.” Matt. v. 45. The sun and the rain, those material elements, were the slaves only of the God of matter: the Supreme Deity might not defile himself with the administration of their blessings. Tertull. adv. Marc. iv. 17.

(2) I think that we may collect from Clement of Alexandria, that the community of women, in the Carpocratian system, was that of Plato. Clement insinuates that it was carried into practice.



The Ophites (1) are, perhaps, the most perplexing of all these sects. It is difficult to ascertain whether the Serpent from which they took or received their name was a good or an evil spirit,—the Agathodæmon of the Egyptian mythology, or the Serpent of the Jewish and other Oriental schemes. With them, a quaternion seems to have issued from the primal Being, the Abyss, who dwelt alone with his Ennoia, or Thought. These were Christ and Sophia Achamoth, the Spirit and Chaos. The former of each of these powers was perfect, the latter imperfect. Sophia Achamoth, departing from the primal source of purity, formed Ialdabaoth, the Prince of Darkness, the Demiurge, an inferior, but not directly malignant, being—the Satan, or Samaël, or Michael. The tutelary angel of the Jews was Ophis, the Serpent—a reflection of Ialdabaoth. With others, the Serpent was the symbol of Christ himself (2); and hence the profound abhorrence with which this obscure sect was beheld by the more orthodox Christians. In other respects, their opinions appear to have approximated more nearly to the common Gnostic form. At the intercession of Sophia, Christ descended on the man Jesus, to rescue the souls of men from the fury of the Demiurge, who had imprisoned them in matter: they ascended through the realm of the seven planetary angels.

Such, in its leading branches, was the Gnosticism of the East, which rivalled the more genuine Christianity, if not in the number of its converts, in the activity with which it was disseminated, especially among the higher and more opulent; and, in its lofty pretensions, claimed a superiority over the humbler Christianity of the vulgar. But for this very reason, Gnosticism, in itself, was diametrically opposite to the true Christian spirit: instead of being popular and universal, it was select and exclusive. It was another, in one respect a higher, form of Judaism, inasmuch as it did not rest its exclusiveness on the title of birth, but on especial knowledge (gnosis), vouchsafed only to the enlightened and inwardly designated few. It was the establishment of the Christians as a kind of religious privileged order, a theophilosophic aristocracy, whose esoteric doctrines soared far above the grasp and comprehension of the vulgar (3). It was a philosophy rather than a religion; at least the philosophic or speculative part would soon have predominated

Gnosti-  
cism not  
popular.

Strom. iii. c. 2. According to Clement, the different sects, or sects of sects, justified their immoralities on different pleas. Some, the Prodician Gnostics, considered public prostitution a mystic communion; others, that all children of the primary or good Deity might exercise their regal privilege of acting as they pleased; some, the Antitactæ, thought it right to break the seventh commandment, because it was uttered by the evil Demiurge. But these were obscure sects, and possibly their adversaries drew these conclusions for them from their doctrines. Strom. i. iii.

(1) Mosheim, p. 399., who wrote a particular dissertation on the Ophitæ, of which he distinguished two sects, a Jewish and a Christian.

(2) M. Matter conjectures that they had derived the notion of the beneficent serpent, the emblem or symbol of Christ, from the brazen serpent in the wilderness. Perhaps it was the Egyptian Agathodæmon.

(3) Tertullian taunts the Valentinians—"nihil magis curant quam occultare quid prædicant, si tamen prædicant qui occultant." Tert. adv. Valent.

over the spiritual. They affected a profound and awful mystery; they admitted their disciples, in general, by slow and regular gradations. Gnostic Christianity, therefore, might have been a formidable antagonist to the prevailing philosophy of the times, but it would never have extirpated an ancient and deeply-rooted religion; it might have drained the schools of their hearers, but it never would have changed the temples into solitudes. It would have affected only the surface of society: it did not begin to work upward from its depths, nor penetrated to that strong under-current of popular feeling and opinion which alone operates a profound and lasting change in the moral sentiments of mankind.

With regard to Paganism, the Gnostics are accused of a compromising and conciliatory spirit, totally alien to that of primitive Christianity. They affected the haughty indifference of the philosophers of their own day, or the Brahmins of India, to the vulgar idolatry; scrupled not a contemptuous conformity with the established worship; attended the rites and the festivals of the Heathen; partook of meats offered in sacrifice, and, secure in their own intellectual or spiritual purity, conceived that no stain could cleave to their uninfected spirits from this which, to most Christians, appeared a treasonable surrender of the vital principles of the faith.

Conciliatory  
towards  
Paganism.

This criminal compliance of the Gnostics, no doubt, countenanced and darkened those charges of unbridled licentiousness of manners with which they are almost indiscriminately assailed by the early fathers. Those dark and incredible accusations of midnight meetings, where all the restraints of shame and of nature were thrown off, which Pagan hostility brought against the general body of the Christians, were reiterated by the Christians against these sects, whose principles were those of the sternest and most rigid austerity. They are accused of openly preaching the indifference of human action. The material nature of man was so essentially evil and malignant, that there was no necessity, as there could be no advantage, in attempting to correct its inveterate propensities. While, therefore, it might pursue, uncontrolled, its own innate and inalienable propensities, the serene and uncontaminated spirit of those, at least, who were enlightened by the divine ray, might remain aloof, either unconscious, or, at least, unparticipant, in the aberrations of its grovelling consort. Such general charges, it is equally unjust to believe, and impossible to refute. The dreamy indolence of mysticism is not unlikely to degenerate into voluptuous excess. The excitement of mental has often a strong effect on bodily, emotion. The party of the Gnostics may have contained many whose passions were too strong for their principles, or who may have made their principles the slaves of their passions; but Christian charity and sober historical criticism concur in rejecting these general accusations. The Gnostics were, in general, imaginative,

rather than practical, fanatics ; they indulged a mental, rather than corporeal, license. The Carpocratians have been exposed to the most obloquy. But, even in their case, the charitable doubts of dispassionate historical criticism are justified by those of an ancient writer, who declares his disbelief of any irreligious, lawless, or forbidden practices among these sectaries (1).

It was the reaction, as it were, of Gnosticism, that produced the last important modification of Christianity, during the second century, the Montanism of Phrygia. But we have, at present, proceeded in our relation of the contest between Orientalism and Christianity so far beyond the period to which we conducted the contest with Paganism, that we reascend at once to the commencement of the second century. Montanism, however thus remotely connected with Gnosticism, stands alone and independent as a new aberration from the primitive Christianity, and will demand our attention in its influence upon one of the most distinguished and effective of the early Christian writers.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CHRISTIANITY DURING THE PROSPEROUS PERIOD OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

Roman  
Emperors  
at the com-  
mence-  
ment of  
the second  
century.

WITH the second century of Christianity commenced the reign of another race of emperors. Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, were men of larger minds, more capable of embracing the vast empire, and of taking a wide and comprehensive survey of the interests, the manners, and the opinions of the various orders and races of men which reposed under the shadow of the Roman sway. They were not, as the first Cæsars, monarchs of Rome, governing the other parts of the world as dependent provinces ; but sovereigns of the Western World, which had gradually coalesced into one majestic and harmonious system. Under the military dominion of Trajan, the empire appeared to reassume the strength and enterprise of the conquering republic : he had invested the whole frontier with a defence more solid and durable than the strongest line of fortresses, or the most impregnable wall—the terror of the Roman arms, and the awe of Roman discipline. If the more prudent Hadrian withdrew the advanced boundaries of the empire, it seemed in the consciousness of strength, disdaining the occupation of wild and savage districts, which rather belonged to the yet unreclaimed realm of barbarism, than were fit to be incorporated in

(1) Καὶ εἰ μὲν πρᾶσσεται παρ' αὐτοῖς τὰ ἄθρα, καὶ ἔκθεσμα, καὶ ἀτειρημένα, ἰσχυρὸν ἂν πιστεύσαιμι. Irenæus, i. 24.



the dominion of civilisation. Even in the East, the Euphrates appeared to be a boundary traced by nature for the dominion of Rome. Hadrian was the first emperor who directed his attention to the general internal affairs of the whole population of the empire. The spirit of jurisprudence prevailed during the reign of the Antonines; and the main object of the ruling powers seemed to be the uniting under one general system of law the various members of the great political confederacy. Thus, each contributed to the apparent union and durability of the social edifice. This period has been considered by many able writers, a kind of golden age of human happiness (1). What, then, was the effect of Christianity on the general character of the times, and how far were the Christian communities excluded from the general felicity?

It was impossible that the rapid and universal progress of a new religion should escape the notice of minds so occupied with the internal, as well as the external affairs of the whole empire. But it so happened (the Christian will admire in this singular concurrence of circumstances the overruling power of a beneficent Deity), that the moderation and humanity of the emperors stepped in, as it were, to allay at this particular crisis the dangers of a general and inevitable collision with the temporal government. Christianity itself was just in that state of advancement in which, though it had begun to threaten, and even to make most alarming encroachments on the established Polytheism, it had not so completely divided the whole race of mankind, as to force the heads of the Polytheistic party, the official conservators of the existing order of things, to take violent and decisive measures for its suppression. The temples, though, perhaps, becoming less crowded, were in few places deserted; the alarm, though, perhaps, in many towns it was deeply brooding in the minds of the priesthood, and of those connected by zeal or by interest with the maintenance of Paganism, was not so profound or so general, as imperiously to require the interposition of the civil authorities. The milder or more indifferent character of the Emperor had free scope to mitigate or to arrest the arm of persecution. The danger was not so pressing but that it might be averted: that which had arisen thus suddenly and unexpectedly (so little were the wisest probably aware of the real nature of the revolution working in the minds of men) might die away with as much rapidity. Under an emperor, indeed, who should have united the vigour of a Trajan and the political forethought of a Hadrian with the sanguinary relentlessness of a Nero, Christianity would have had to pass a tremendous ordeal. Now, however, the collision of the new religion with the civil power was only occasional, and, as it were, fortuitous; and in these occasional

Characters  
of the Em-  
perors fa-  
vourable  
to the ad-  
vancement  
of Christi-  
anity.

(1) This theory is most ably developed by Hegewisch. See the Translation of his Essay, by M. Solvet. Paris, 1834.

conflicts with the ruling powers, we constantly appear to trace the character of the reigning sovereign. Of these emperors, Trajan possessed the most powerful and vigorous mind—a consummate general, a humane but active ruler : Hadrian was the profoundest statesman, the Antonines the best men. The conduct of Trajan was that of a military sovereign, whose natural disposition was tempered with humanity—prompt, decisive, never unnecessarily prodigal of blood, but careless of human life, if it appeared to stand in the way of any important design, or to hazard that paramount object of the government, the public peace. Hadrian was inclined to a more temporising policy : the more the Roman empire was contemplated as a whole, the more the co-existence of multifarious religions might appear compatible with the general peace. Christianity might, in the end, be no more dangerous than the other foreign religions, which had flowed, and were still flowing in, from the East. The temples of Isis had arisen throughout the empire ; but those of Jupiter or Apollo had not lost their votaries : the Eastern mysteries, the Phrygian, at a later period the Mithriac, had mingled, very little to their prejudice, into the general mass of the prevailing superstitions. The last characteristic of Christianity which would be distinctly understood, was its invasive and uncompromising spirit. The elder Antonine may have pursued from mildness of character the course adopted by Hadrian from policy. The change which took place during the reign of Marcus Aurelius may be attributed to the circumstances of the time ; though the pride of philosophy, as well as the established religion, might begin to take the alarm.

Christianity had probably spread with partial and very unequal success in different quarters : its converts bore in various cities or districts a very different proportion to the rest of the population. No where, perhaps, had it advanced with greater rapidity than in the northern provinces of Asia Minor, where the inhabitants were of very mingled descent, neither purely Greek, nor essentially Asiatic with a considerable proportion of Jewish colonists, chiefly of Babylonian or Syrian, not of Palestinian origin. It was here, in the province of Bithynia, that Polytheism first discovered the deadly enemy, which was undermining her authority. It was here that the first cry of distress was uttered ; and complaints of deserted temples and less frequent sacrifices were brought before the tribunal of the government. The memorable correspondence between Pliny and Trajan is the most valuable record of the early Christian history during this period (1). It represents to us Paganism already claiming the alliance of power to maintain its decaying influence ;

Trajan  
Emperor  
from  
A. D. 98 to  
116.

Hadrian  
Emperor  
from 117  
to 138.

Antoninus  
Pius Em-  
peror from  
138 to 161.

Christian-  
ity in Bi-  
thynia and  
the adja-  
cent pro-  
vinces.  
A. D. 111,  
or 112.

(1) The chronology of Pagi (*Critica in Baronium*) appears to me the most trustworthy. He places the letter of Pliny in the year cxi. or cxii.; the martyrdom of Ignatius or rather the period

when he was sent to Rome, in cxii., the time when Trajan was in the East, preparing for his Persian war.

Christianity proceeding in its silent course, imperfectly understood by a wise and polite Pagan, yet still with nothing to offend his moral judgment, except its contumacious repugnance to the common usages of society. This contumacy, nevertheless, according to the recognised principle of passive obedience to the laws of the empire, was deserving of the severest punishment (1). The appeal of Pliny to the supreme authority for advice, as to the course to be pursued with these new, and, in most respects, harmless delinquents, unquestionably implies that no general practice had yet been laid down to guide the provincial governors under such emergencies (2). The answer of Trajan is characterised by a spirit of moderation. It betrays a humane anxiety to allow all such offenders as were not forced under the cognisance of the public tribunals, to elude persecution. Nevertheless it distinctly intimates, that by some existing law, or by the ordinary power of the provincial governor, the Christians were amenable to the severest penalties, to torture, and even to capital punishment. Such punishment had already been inflicted by Pliny; the governor had been forced to interfere, by accusations lodged before his tribunal. An anonymous libel, or impeachment, had denounced numbers of persons, some of whom altogether disclaimed, others declared that they had renounced Christianity. With that unthinking barbarity with which in those times such punishments were inflicted on persons in inferior station, two servants, females—it is possible they were deaconesses—were put to the torture, to ascertain the truth of the vulgar accusations against the Christians. On their evidence, Pliny could detect nothing further than a “culpable and extravagant superstition (3).” The only facts which he could discover were, that they had a custom of meeting together before daylight, and singing a hymn to Christ as God. They were bound together by no unlawful sacrament, but only under mutual obligation not to commit theft, robbery, adultery, or fraud. They met again, and partook together of food, but that of a perfectly innocent kind. The test of guilt to which he submitted the more obstinate delinquents, was adoration before the statues of the Gods and of the Emperor, and the malediction of Christ. Those who refused he ordered to be led out to execution (4). Such was the summary process of the Roman governor; and the approbation of the Emperor clearly shows, that he had not exceeded the recognised limits of his authority. Neither Trajan nor the senate had before this issued any edict on the subject. The

Letter of  
Pliny.

Answer of  
Trajan.

(1) The conjecture of Pagi, that the attention of the government was directed to the Christians by their standing aloof from the festivals on the celebration of the Quindecennalia of Trajan, which fell on the year cxi. or cxii., is extremely probable. Pagi quotes two passages of Pliny on the subject of these general rejoicings. *Critica in Bar. i. p. 100.*

(2) Pliny professes his ignorance, because he had never happened to be present at the trial of such causes. This implies that such trials were not unprecedented.

(3) *Prava et immodica superstitio.*

(4) *Duci jussi* cannot bear a milder interpretation.



rescript to Pliny invested him in no new powers, it merely advised him, as he had done, to use his actual powers with discretion (1), neither to encourage the denunciation of such criminals, nor to proceed without fair and unquestionable evidence. The system of anonymous delation, by which private malice might wreak itself, by false or by unnecessary charges upon its enemies, Trajan reprobates in that generous spirit with which the wiser and more virtuous emperors constantly repressed that most disgraceful iniquity of the times (2). But it is manifest from the executions ordered by Pliny, and sanctioned by the approbation of the emperor, that Christianity was *already* an offence amenable to capital punishment (3), and this, either under some existing statute, under the common law of the empire which invested the provincial governor with the arbitrary power of life and death, or lastly, what in this instance cannot have been the case, the *summum imperium* of the Emperor (4). While then in the individual the profession of Christianity might thus by the summary sentence of the governor, and the tacit approbation of the Emperor, be treated as a capital offence, and the provincial governor might appoint the measure and the extent of the punishment, all public assemblies for the purpose of new and unauthorised worship might likewise be suppressed by the magistrate; for the police of the empire always looked with the utmost jealousy on all associations not recognised by the law; and resistance to such a mandate would call down, or the secret holding of such meetings after their prohibition, would incur any penalty, which the conservator of public order might think proper to inflict upon the delinquent. Such then was the general position of the Christians with the ruling authorities. They were guilty of a crime against the state, by introducing a new and unauthorized religion, or by holding assemblages contrary to the internal regulations of the empire. But the extent to which the law would be enforced against them—how far Christianity would be distinguished from Judaism and other foreign religions, which were permitted the free establishment of their rites—with how much greater jealousy their secret assemblies would be watched than those of other mysteries and esoteric religions—all this would depend upon the milder or more rigid character of the governor, and the willingness or reluctance of their fellow-citizens to arraign them

(1) Actum quem debuisti in executendis causis eorum, qui Christiani ad te delati fuerant, secutus es. Traj. ad Plin.

(2) Nam et pessimi exempli, nec nostri sæculi est.

(3) Those who were Roman citizens were sent for trial to Rome. Alii quia cives Romani erant, adnotavi in urbem remittendos.

(4) This rescript or answer of Trajan, approving of the manner in which Pliny carried his law into execution, and suggesting other regulations

for his conduct, is converted by Mosheim into a new law, which from that time became one of the statutes of the empire. Hæc Trajani lex inter publicas Imperii sanctiones relata (p. 234.). Trajan's words expressly declare that no certain rule of proceeding can be laid down, and leave almost the whole question to the discretion of the magistrate. Neque enim in universum aliquid, quod quasi certam formam habeat, constitui potest. Traj. ad Plin.

before the tribunal of the magistrates. This in turn would depend on the circumstances of the place and the time; on the caprice of their enemies; on their own discretion; on their success and the apprehensions and jealousies of their opponents. In general, so long as they made no visible impression upon society, so long as their absence from the religious rites of the city or district, or even from the games and theatrical exhibitions, which were essential parts of the existing Polytheism, caused no sensible diminution in the concourse of the worshippers, their unsocial and self-secluding disposition would be treated with contempt and pity rather than with animosity. The internal decay of the spirit of Polytheism had little effect on its outward splendour. The philosophic party, who despised the popular faith, were secure in their rank, or in their decent conformity to the public ceremonial. The theory of all the systems of philosophy was to avoid unnecessary collision with the popular religious sentiment: their superiority to the vulgar was flattered, rather than offended, by the adherence of the latter to their native superstitions. In the public exhibitions, the followers of all other foreign religions met, as on a common ground. In the theatre or the hippodrome, the worshipper of Isis or of Mithra mingled with the mass of those who still adhered to Bacchus or to Jupiter. Even the Jews, in many parts, at least at a later period, in some instances at the present, betrayed no aversion to the popular games or amusements. Though in Palestine, the elder Herod had met with a sullen and intractable resistance in the religious body of the people, against his attempt to introduce Gentile and idolatrous games into the Holy Land, yet it is probable that the foreign Jews were more accommodating. A Jewish player, named Aliturus, stood high in the favour of Nero; nor does it appear that he had abandoned his religion. He was still connected with his own race; and some of the priesthood did not disdain to owe their acquittal, on certain charges on which they had been sent prisoners to Rome, to his interest with the Emperor, or with the ruling favourite Poppæa. After the Jewish war, multitudes of the prisoners were forced to exhibit themselves as gladiators; and at a later period, the confluence of the Alexandrian Jews to the theatres, where they equalled in numbers the Pagan spectators, endangered the peace of the city. The Christians alone stood aloof from exhibitions which, in their higher and nobler forms, arose out of, and were closely connected with, the Heathen religion; were performed on days sacred to the deities; introduced the deities upon the stage; and, in short, were among the principal means of maintaining in the public mind its reverence for the old mythological fables. The sanguinary diversions of the arena, and the licentious voluptuousness of some of the other exhibitions, were no less offensive to their humanity and their modesty, than those more strictly religious to their piety.

The Jews  
not averse  
to theatri-  
cal amuse-  
ments.

Christians  
abstain  
from them.

its danger  
on occa-  
sions of  
political  
rejoicings.

Still, as long as they were comparatively few in number, and did not sensibly diminish the concourse to these scenes of public enjoyment, they would be rather exposed to individual acts of vexatious interference, of ridicule, or contempt, than become the victims of a general hostile feeling : their absence would not be resented as an insult upon the public, nor as an act of punishable disrespect against the local or more widely-worshipped deity to whose honour the games were dedicated. The time at which they would be in the greatest danger from what would be thought their suspicious or disloyal refusal to join in the public rejoicings, would be precisely that which has been conjectured with much ingenuity and probability to have been the occasion of their being thus committed with the popular sentiment and with the government,—the celebration of the birthday, or the accession of the Emperor. With the ceremonial of those days, even if, as may have been the case, the actual adoration of the statue of the Emperor was not an ordinary part of the ritual, much which was strictly idolatrous would be mingled up; and their ordinary excuse to such charges of disaffection, that they prayed with the utmost fervour for the welfare of the Emperor, would not be admitted, either by the sincere attachment of the people and of the government to a virtuous, or their abject and adulatory celebration of a cruel and tyrannical, Emperor.

This crisis in the fate of Christianity; this transition from safe and despicable obscurity to dangerous and obnoxious importance, would of course depend on the comparative rapidity of its progress in different quarters. In the province of Pliny, it had attained that height in little more than seventy years after the death of Christ. Though an humane and enlightened government might still endeavour to close its eyes upon its multiplying numbers and expanding influence, the keener sight of jealous interest, of rivalry in the command of the popular mind, and of mortified pride, already anticipated the time when this formidable antagonist might balance, might at length overweigh, the failing powers of Polytheism. Under a less candid governor than Pliny, and an Emperor less humane and dispassionate than Trajan, the exterminating sword of persecution would have been let loose, and a relentless and systematic edict for the suppression of Christianity hunted down its followers in every quarter of the empire.

Probable  
connection  
of the per-  
secution  
under Pli-  
ny with  
the state of  
the East.

Not only the wisdom and humanity of Trajan, but the military character of his reign, would tend to divert his attention from that which belonged rather to the internal administration of the empire. It is not altogether impossible, though the conjecture is not countenanced by any allusion in the despatch of Pliny, that the measures adopted against the Christians were not entirely unconnected with the political state of the East. The Roman empire, in the Mesopo-



lamian province, was held on a precarious tenure; the Parthian kingdom had acquired new vigour and energy, and during great part of his reign, the state of the East must have occupied the active mind of Trajan. The Jewish population of Babylonia and the adjacent provinces were of no inconsiderable importance in the impending contest. There is strong ground for supposing that the last insurrection of the Jews, under Hadrian, was connected with a rising of their brethren in Mesopotamia, no doubt secretly, if not openly, fomented by the intrigues, and depending on the support, of the king of Parthia. This was at a considerably later period; yet, during the earlier part of the reign of Trajan, the insurrection had already commenced in Egypt and in Cyrene, and in the island of Cyprus, and no sooner were the troops of Trajan engaged on the Eastern frontier towards the close of his reign, than the Jews rose up in all these provinces, and were not subdued till after they had perpetrated and endured the most terrific massacres (1). Throughout the Eastern wars of Trajan, this spirit was most likely known to be fermenting in the minds of the whole Jewish population, not only in the insurgent districts, but in Palestine and other parts of the empire. The whole race, which occupied in such vast numbers the conterminous regions, therefore, would be watched with hostile jealousy by the Roman governors, already prejudiced against their unruly and ungovernable character, and awakened to more than ordinary vigilance by the disturbed aspect of the times. The Christians stood in a singular and ambiguous position between the Jewish and Pagan population; many of them probably descended from, and connected with, the former. Their general peaceful habits and orderly conduct would deserve the protection of a parental government, still their intractable and persevering resistance to the religious institutions of the empire might throw some suspicion on the sincerity of their civil obedience. The unusual assertion of religious might be too closely allied with that of political independence. At all events, the dubious and menacing state of the East required more than ordinary watchfulness, and a more rigid plan of government in the adjacent provinces; and thus the change in society, which was working unnoticed in the more peaceful and less Christianised West, in the East might be forced upon the attention of an active and inquiring ruler; the apprehensions of the inhabitants themselves would be more keenly alive to the formation of a separate and secluded party within their cities; and religious animosity would eagerly seize the opportunity of implicating its enemies in a charge of disaffection to the existing government. Nor is there wanting evidence that the acts of persecution ascribed to Trajan were, in fact, connected with the military movements of the

(1) Euseb. iv. 2. Dio. Cass. , or rather, Xyphilin. Orosius, l. 7. Pagi places this Jewish rebellion, A. D. 116.

Emperor. The only authentic Acts are those of Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem, and of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (1). In the prefatory observations to the former, it is admitted that it was a local act of violence. The more celebrated trial of Ignatius is stated to have taken place before the Emperor himself at Antioch, when he was preparing for his first Eastern campaign (2). The Emperor is represented as kindling to anger at the disparagement of those gods on whose protection he depended in the impending war. "What, is our religion to be treated as senseless? Are the gods, on whose alliance we rely against our enemies, to be turned to scorn (3)?" If we may trust the epistles ascribed to this bishop, there was an eagerness for martyrdom not quite consistent with the conduct of the Apostles, and betraying a spirit, which, at least, would not allow, by prudential concession, the indignation and resentment of the government (4).

Hadrian  
Emperor,  
A. D. 117.

The cosmopolite and indefatigable mind of Hadrian was more likely to discern with accuracy, and estimate to its real extent, the growing influence of the new religion. Hadrian was, still more than his predecessor, the Emperor of the West, rather than the monarch of Rome. His active genius withdrew itself altogether from warlike enterprise and foreign conquest; its whole care was centered on the consolidation of the empire within its narrower and uncontested boundaries, and on the internal regulation of the vast confederacy of nations which were gradually becoming more and more assimilated, as subjects or members of the great European empire. The remotest provinces for the first time beheld the presence of the Emperor, not at the head of an army, summoned to defend the insulted barriers of the Roman territory, or pushing forward the advancing line of conquest, but in more peaceful array, providing for the future security of the frontier by impregnable fortresses; adorning the more flourishing cities with public buildings, bridges, and aqueducts; inquiring into the customs, manners, and even the religion, of the more distant parts of the world; encouraging commerce; promoting the arts; in short, improving, by salutary regulations, this long period of peace, to the prosperity and civilisation of the whole empire. Gaul, Britain, Greece, Syria, Egypt, Africa, were in turn honoured by the presence, enriched by the liberality, and benefited by the wise policy of the Emperor (5). His personal

Character  
of Ha-  
drian.

(1) See them in Ruinart. *Selecta et sincera Martyrum Acta*.

(2) According to the chronology of Pagi, A. D. 112.

(3) ἡμεῖς οὖν σοι δοκοῦμεν κατὰ νοῦν μὴ ἔχειν θεούς, οἷς καὶ χρώμεθα θυμῶν πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους. The Jewish legends are full of acts of personal cruelty, ascribed to Trajan, mingled up, as usual, with historical errors and anachronisms. See *Hist. of Jews*, iii. 109.

(4) The epistles represent Ignatius as holding

correspondence with the most eminent bishops of Asia Minor, who do not appear to have been in danger of persecution; that to the Romans deprecates all kindly interference with the government to avert the glorious destiny which he coveted, and intimates some apprehension lest their unwelcome appeal to the imperial clemency might meet with success. I consider this an argument for their authenticity.

(5) M. St. Croix observes (in an essay in the *Mem. de l'Académ.* xlix. 409.) that we have medals of twenty-five countries through which

character showed the same incessant activity and politic versatility. On the frontier, at the head of the army, he put on the hardihood and simplicity of a soldier; disdained any distinction, either of fare or of comfort, from the meanest legionary; and marched on foot, through the most inclement seasons. In the peaceful and voluptuous cities of the South, he became the careless and luxurious Epicurean. Hadrian treated the established religion with the utmost respect; he officiated with solemn dignity as supreme pontiff, and at Rome affected disdain or aversion for foreign religions (1). But his mind was essentially imbued with the philosophic spirit (2): he was tempted by every abstruse research, and every forbidden inquiry had irresistible attraction for his curious and busy temper (3). At Athens, he was in turn the simple and rational philosopher, the restorer of the splendid temple of Jupiter Olympius, and the awe-struck worshipper in the Eleusinian mysteries (4). In the East, he aspired to penetrate the recondite secrets of magic, and professed himself an adept in judicial astrology. In the midst of all this tampering with foreign religions, he at once honoured and outraged the prevailing creed, by the deification of Antinous, in whose honour quinquennial games were established at Mantinea; a city built, and a temple, with an endowment for a priesthood (5), founded and called by his name, in Egypt: his statues assumed the symbols of various deities. Acts like these, at this critical period, must have tended to alienate a large portion of the thinking class, already wavering in their cold and doubtful Polytheism, to any purer or more ennobling system of religion.

Hadrian not merely surveyed the surface of society, but his sagacity seemed to penetrate deeper into the relations of the different classes to each other, and into the more secret workings of the social system. His regulations for the mitigation of slavery were recommended, not by humanity alone, but by a wise and prudent policy (6). It was impossible that the rapid growth of Christianity could escape the notice of a mind so inquiring as that of Hadrian, or that he could be altogether blind to its ultimate bearings on the social state of the empire. Yet, the generally humane and pacific

Hadrian travelled. (Compare Eckhel, vi. 486.) He looked into the crater of Etna; saw the sun rise from Mount Casius; ascended to the cataracts of the Nile; heard the statue of Memnon. He imported exotics from the East. The journeys of Hadrian are traced, in a note to M. Solvet's translation of Hegewisch, cited above. Tertullian calls him *curiositatum omnium explorator*. Apol. i. v. Eusebius, E. H. v. 5., πάντα τὰ περίεργα πολυπραγμονῶν.

(1) Sacra Romana diligentissimè curavit, peregrina contempsit. Spartian. in Hadrian.

(2) Les autres sentimens de ce prince sont très difficiles à connaître. Il n'embrassa aucune secte, et ne fut ni Académicien, ni Stoïcien, encore moins Epicurien; il parut constamment livré à cette incertitude d'opinions, fruit de la

bizarrière de son caractère, et d'un savoir superficiel ou mal digéré. St. Croix, ubi supra.

(3) In the *Cæsars* of Julian, Hadrian is described in the pregnant phrase *πολυπραγμονῶν τὰ ἀπόρρητα*,—busied about all the secret religions.

(4) The Apology of Quadratus was presented on Hadrian's visit to Athens, when he was initiated in the mysteries; that of Aristides when he became Epoptes, A. D. 131. Warburton connects the hostility of the celebrators of the mysteries towards Christianity with the Apology of Quadratus, and quotes a passage from Jerome to this effect. Compare Routh's *Reliquiæ Sacre*, i. 70.

(5) Euseb. iv. 8. Hieronym. in Catal. et Rufin.

(6) Gibbon, vol. i. ch. ii. p. 71.



Hadrian's  
conduct  
towards  
Christi-  
anity.

character of his government would be a security against violent measures of persecution; and the liberal study of the varieties of human opinion would induce, if not a wise and rational spirit of toleration, yet a kind of contemptuous indifference towards the most inexplicable aberrations from the prevailing opinions. The apologists for Christianity, Quadratus and Aristides, addressed their works to the Emperor, who does not appear to have repelled their respectful homage (1). The rescript which he addressed, in the early part of his reign, to the proconsul of Asia, afforded the same protection to the Christians against the more formidable danger of popular animosity, which Trajan had granted against anonymous delation. In some of the Asiatic cities, their sullen and unsocial absence from the public assemblies, from the games, and other public exhibitions, either provoked or gave an opportunity for the latent animosity to break out against them. A general acclamation would sometimes demand their punishment. "The Christians to the lions!" was the general outcry; and the names of the most prominent or obnoxious of the community would be denounced with the same sudden and uncontrollable hostility. A weak or superstitious magistrate trembled before the popular voice, or lent himself a willing instrument to the fury of the populace. The proconsul Serenus Granianus consulted the Emperor as to the course to be pursued on such occasions. The answer of Hadrian is addressed to Minucius Fundanus, probably the successor of Granianus, enacting that, in the prosecution of the Christians, the formalities of law should be strictly complied with; that they should be regularly arraigned before the legal tribunal, not condemned on the mere demand of the populace, or in compliance with a lawless outcry (2). The edict does credit to the humanity and wisdom of Hadrian. But, notwithstanding his active and inquisitive mind, and the ability of his general policy, few persons were, perhaps, less qualified to judge of the real nature of the new religion, or to comprehend the tenacious hold which it would obtain upon the mind of man. His character wanted depth and seriousness, to penetrate or to understand the workings of a high, profound, and settled religious enthusiasm (3). The graceful verses,

Hadrian  
incapable  
of under-  
standing  
Christi-  
anity.

(1) See the fragments in Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacrae*, i. 69—78.

(2) Justin Martyr, *Apol.* i. 68, 69 Euseb. H. E. iv. 9. Mosheim, whose opinions on the state of the Christians are coloured by too lenient a view of Roman toleration, considers this edict by no means more favourable to the Christians than that of Trajan. It evidently offered them protection under a new and peculiar exigency.

(3) The well-known letter of Hadrian gives a singular view of the state of the religious society, as it existed, or, rather, as it appeared to the inquisitive Emperor. "I am now, my dear Servianus, become fully acquainted with that Egypt which you praise so highly. I have found the people vain, fickle, and shifting with every breath of popular rumour. Those who worship Serapis

are Christians; and those who call themselves Christian bishops are worshippers of Serapis. There is no ruler of a Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no Christian bishop, who is not an astrologer, an interpreter of prodigies, and an anointer. The Patriarch himself, when he comes to Egypt, is compelled by one party to worship Serapis, by the other, Christ. . . . They have but one God: him, Christians, Jews, and Gentiles, worship alike." This latter clause Casaubon understood seriously. It is evidently malicious satire. The common God is Gain. The key to the former curious statement is probably that the tone of the higher, the fashionable, society of Alexandria, was to affect, either on some Gnostic or philosophic theory, that all these religions differed only in form, but were essentially the

which he addressed to his departing spirit (1), contrasts with the solemn earnestness with which the Christians were teaching mankind to consider the mysteries of another life. But, on the whole, the long and peaceful reign of Hadrian allowed free scope to the progress of Christianity; the increasing wealth and prosperity of the empire probably raised in the social scale that class among which it was chiefly disseminated; while the better part of the more opulent would be tempted, at least to make themselves acquainted with a religion, the moral influence of which was so manifestly favourable to the happiness of mankind, and which offered so noble a solution of the great problem of human philosophy, the immortality of the soul.

The gentle temper of the first Antoninus would maintain that milder system which was adopted by Hadrian, from policy or from indifference. The Emperor, whose parental vigilance scrutinised the minutest affairs of the most remote province, could not be ignorant, though his own residence was fixed in Rome and its immediate neighbourhood, of the still expanding progress of Christianity. The religion itself acquired every year a more public character. The Apology now assumed the tone of an arraignment of the folly and unholiness of the established Polytheism; nor was this a low and concealed murmur within the walls of its own places of assemblage, or propagated in the quiet intercourse of the brethren. It no longer affected disguise, nor dissembled its hopes; it approached the foot of the throne; it stood in the attitude, indeed, of a suppliant, claiming the inalienable rights of conscience, but asserting in simple confidence its moral superiority, and in the name of an apology, publicly preaching its own doctrines in the ears of the sovereign and of the world. The philosophers were joining its ranks; it was rapidly growing up into a rival power, both of the religions and philosophies of the world. Yet, during a reign in which human life assumed a value and a sanctity before unknown; in which the hallowed person of a senator was not once violated, even by the stern hand of justice (2); under an emperor who professed and practised the maxim of Scipio, that he had rather save the life of a single citizen than cause the death of a thousand enemies (3); who considered the subjects of the empire as one family, of which himself was the parent (4), even religious zeal would be rebuked and overawed; and the provincial governments, which too often

Antoninus  
Pius Em-  
peror,  
A. D. 138.

same; that all adored one Deity, all one Logos or Demiurge, under different names; all employed the same arts to impose upon the vulgar, and all were equally despicable to the real philosopher. Dr. Burton, in his History of the Church, suggested, with much ingenuity, that the Samaritans may have been the Gnostic followers of Simon Magus.

(1) Animula, vagula, blandula.  
Hospes, comesque corporis.  
Quæ nunc abibis in loca

(2) Jul. Capit. Anton. Pius, Aug. Script. p. 138.

(3) Ibid, p. 140.

(4) The reign of Antoninus the First is almost a blank in history. The book of Dion Cassius which contained his reign was lost, except a small part, when Xiphilin wrote. Xiphilin asserts that Antoninus favoured the Christians.

reflected the fierce passions and violent barbarities of the throne, would now, in turn, image back the calm and placid serenity of the imperial tribunal. Edicts are said to have been issued to some of the Grecian cities—Larissa, Thessalonica, and Athens—and to the Greeks in general, to refrain from any unprecedented severities against the Christians. Another rescript (1), addressed to the cities of Asia Minor, speaks language too distinctly Christian even for the anticipated Christianity of disposition evinced by Antoninus. It calls upon the Pagans to avert the anger of Heaven, which was displayed in earthquakes and other public calamities, by imitating the piety, rather than denouncing the atheism, of the Christians. The pleasing vision must, it is to be feared, be abandoned, which would represent the best of the Pagan Emperors bearing his public testimony in favour of the calumniated Christians; the man who, from whatever cause, deservedly bore the name of the Pious among the adherents of his own religion, the most wisely tolerant to the faith of the Gospel.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### CHRISTIANITY AND MARCUS AURELIUS THE PHILOSOPHER.

THE virtue of Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher, was of a more lofty and vigorous character than that of his gentle predecessor. The second Antonine might seem the last effort of Paganism, or rather of Gentile philosophy, to raise a worthy opponent to the triumphant career of Christianity. A blameless disciple in the severest school of philosophic morality, the austerity of Marcus rivalled that of the Christians in its contempt of the follies and diversions of life; yet his native kindness of disposition was not hardened and embittered by the severity or the pride of his philosophy (2). With Aurelius, nevertheless, Christianity found not only a fair and high-minded competitor for the command of the human mind; not only a rival in the exaltation of the soul of man to higher views and more dignified motives, but a violent and intolerant persecutor. During his reign, the martyrologies become more authentic and credible; the general voice of Christian history arraigns the philosopher, not indeed as the author of a general and systematic plan for the extirpation of Christianity, but as withdrawing even

(1) The rescript of Antonine, in Eusebius, to which Xiphilina alludes (Euseb. iv. 13), in favour of the Christians, is now generally given up as spurious. The older writers disputed to which of the Antonines it belonged. Lardner argues, from the Apologies of Justin Martyr, that the Christians were persecuted "even to death," during this reign. The inference is inconclusive:

they were obnoxious to the law, and might endeavour to gain the law on their side, though it may not have been carried into execution. The general voice of Christian antiquity is favourable to the first Antoninus,

(2) *Verecundus sine ignavia, sine tristitia gravis.* Jul. Capit. Aug. Hist. p. 160.



the ambiguous protection of the former Emperors, and giving free scope to the excited passions, the wounded pride, and the jealous interests of its enemies; neither discountenancing the stern determination of the haughty governor to break the contumacious spirit of resistance to his authority, nor the outburst of popular fury, which sought to appease the offended gods by the sacrifice of these despisers of their Deities.

Three important causes concurred in bringing about this dangerous crisis in the destiny of Christianity at this particular period : —1. The change in the relative position of Christianity with the religion of the empire; 2. the circumstances of the times; 3. the character of the Emperor. 1. Sixty years of almost uninterrupted peace, since the beginning of the second century, had opened a wide field for the free development of Christianity. It had spread into every quarter of the Roman dominions. The western provinces, Gaul and Africa, rivalled the East in the number, if not in the opulence, of their Christian congregations : in almost every city had gradually arisen a separate community, seceding from the ordinary habits and usages of life, at least from the public religious ceremonial; governed by its own laws; acting upon a common principle; and bound together in a kind of latent federal union throughout the empire. A close and intimate correspondence connected this new moral republic; an impulse, an opinion, a feeling, which originated in Egypt or Syria, was propagated with electric rapidity to the remotest frontier of the West. Irenæus, the Bishop of Lyons, in Gaul, whose purer Greek had been in danger of corruption from his intercourse with the barbarous Celtic tribes, enters into a controversy with the speculative teachers of Antioch, Edessa, or Alexandria, while Tertullian in his rude African Latin denounces or advocates opinions which sprung up in Pontus or in Phrygia. A new kind of literature had arisen, propagated with the utmost zeal of proselytism, among a numerous class of readers, who began to close their ears against the profanes fables, and unsatisfactory philosophical systems, of Paganism. While the Emperor himself condescended, in Greek of no despicable purity and elegance for the age, to explain the lofty tenets of the Porch, and to commend its noble morality to his subjects, the minds of a large portion of the world were preoccupied by writers who, in language often impregnated with foreign and Syrian barbarisms, enforced still higher morals, resting upon religious tenets altogether new and incomprehensible, excepting to the initiate. Their sacred books were of still higher authority; commanded the homage, and required the diligent and respectful study, of all the disciples of the new faith. Nor was this empire within the empire, this universally disseminated sect,—which had its own religious rites, its own laws, to which it appealed rather than to the statutes of the empire; its

Three causes of the hostility of M. Aurelius and his government to Christianity. 1. Altered position of Christianity in regard to Paganism.

own judges (for the Christians, wherever they were able, submitted their disputes to their bishop and his associate presbyters) its own financial regulations, whether for the maintenance of public worship, or for charitable purposes; its own religious superiors, who exercised a very different control from that of the pontiffs or sacerdotal colleges of Paganism; its own usages and conduct; in some respects its own language;—confined to one class, or to one description of Roman subjects. Christians were to be found in the court, in the camp, in the commercial market; they discharged all the duties, and did not decline any of the offices, of society. They did not altogether shun the forum, or abandon all interest in the civil administration; they had their mercantile transactions, in common with the rest of that class. One of their apologists indignantly repels the charge of their being useless to society: “We are no Indian Brahmins, or devotees, living naked in the woods, self-banished from civilised life (1).” Among their most remarkable distinctions, no doubt, was their admission of slaves to an equality in religious privileges. Yet there was no attempt to disorganise or correct the existing relations of society. Though the treatment of slaves in Christian families could not but be softened and humanised, as well by the evangelic temper, as by this acknowledged equality in the hopes of another life, yet Christianity left the emancipation of mankind from these deeply-rooted distinctions between the free and servile races, to times which might be ripe for so great and important a change.

This secession of one part of society from its accustomed religious intercourse with the rest, independent of the numbers whose feelings and interests were implicated in the support of the national religion in all its pomp and authority, would necessarily produce estrangement, jealousy, animosity.

As Christianity became more powerful, a vague apprehension began to spread abroad among the Roman people that the fall of their old religion might, to a certain degree, involve that of their civil dominion; and this apprehension, it cannot be denied, was justified, deepened, and confirmed, by the tone of some of the Christian writings, no doubt, by the language of some Christian teachers. Idolatry was not merely an individual, but a national, sin, which would be visited by temporal as well as spiritual retribution. The anxiety of one at least, and that certainly not the most discreet of the Christian apologists, to disclaim all hostility towards the temporal dignity of the empire, implies that the Christians were ob-

Con-  
nec-  
tion of  
Christi-  
anity with  
the fall of  
the Roman  
empire.

(1) *Infructuosi in negotiis dicimur. Quo pacto homines vobiscum degentes, ejusdem victus, habitus, instinctus, ejusdem ad vitam necessitatis? Neque enim Brachmanæ, aut Indorum gymnosophistæ sumus, sylvicolæ et exules vitæ. Meminimus gratiam nos debere Deo domino creatori, nullum fructum operum ejus repudiamur, plane temperamus, ne ultra modum aut perperam uti-*

*mur. Itaque non sine foro, non sine macello, non sine balneis, tabernis, officinis, stabulis, nundinis vestris, cæterisque commerciis, cohabitamus in hoc seculo: navigamus et nos vobiscum et militamus, et rusticamur, et mercamur; proinde miscemus artes, opera nostra publicamus usui vestro. Tertull. Apologet. c. 42.*

noxious to this charge. The Christians are calumniated, writes Tertullian to Scapula (1), at a somewhat later period (under Severus), as guilty of treasonable disloyalty to the Emperor. As the occasion required, he exculpates them from any leaning to Niger, Albinus, or Cassius, the competitors of Severus, and then proceeds to make this solemn protestation of loyalty. "The Christian is the enemy of no man, assuredly not of the Emperor. The sovereign he knows to be ordained by God : of necessity, therefore, he loves, reveres, and honours him, and prays for his safety, with that of the whole Roman empire, that it may endure—and endure it will—as long as the world itself (2)." But other Christian documents, or at least documents eagerly disseminated by the Christians, speak a very different language (3). By many modern interpreters, the Apocalypse itself is supposed to refer not to the fall of a predicted spiritual Rome, but of the dominant Pagan Rome, the visible Babylon of idolatry, and pride, and cruelty. According to this view, it is a grand dramatic vaticination of the triumph of Christianity over Heathenism, in its secular as well as its spiritual power. Be this as it may, in later writings, the threatening and maledictory tone of the Apocalypse is manifestly borrowed, and directed against the total abolition of Paganism, in its civil as well as religious supremacy. Many of these forged prophetic writings belong to the reign of the Antonines, and could not emanate from any quarter but that of the more injudicious and fanatical Christians. The second (Apocryphal) book of Esdras is of this character, the work of a Judaising Christian (4); it refers distinctly to the reign of the twelve Cæsars (5), and obscurely intimates, in many parts, the approaching dissolution of the existing order of things. The doctrine of the Millennium, which was as yet far from exploded, or fallen into disregard, mingled with all these prophetic anticipations of future change in the destinies of mankind (6). The visible throne of Christ according to these writings, was to be erected on the ruins of all earthly empires : the nature of his kingdom would, of course, be unintelligible to the Heathen; and all that he would comprehend would be a vague notion that the empire of the world was to be transferred from Rome, and that this extinction of the majesty of the empire was, in some incomprehensible manner, connected with the triumph of the new faith. His terror, his indignation, and his contempt,

Tone of  
some  
Christian  
writings  
confirmatory  
of this  
apprehension.

(1) Sed et circa majestatem imperii infamatur, tamen nunquam Albiniani, nec Nigriciani, vel Cassiani, inveniri potuerunt Christiani.

Christianus nullius est hostis, nedom imperatoris; quem sciens a Deo suo constitui, necesse est ut et ipsum diligat, et revereatur, et honoret, et salvum velit, cum toto Romano imperio, quousque sæculum stabit: tamdiu enim stabit. Ad Scapulam, 1.

(2) Quousque sæculum stabit.

(3) I have been much indebted, in this passage, to the excellent work of Tsebirner, "der Fall des Heidenthums," a work written with so

much learning, candour, and Christian temper, as to excite great regret that it was left incomplete at its author's death.

(4) The general character of the work, the nationality of the perpetual allusions to the history and fortunes of the race of Israel, betray the Jew; the passages ch. ii. 42. 48.; v. 5.; vii. 26. 29., are avowed Christianity.

(5) C. xii. 14. Compare Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, l. vii. c. 2.

(6) There are apparent allusions to the Millennium in the Sibylline verses, particularly at the close of the eighth book.



would lead to fierce and implacable animosity. Even in Tertullian's *Apology*, the ambiguous word "sæculum" might mean no more than a brief and limited period, which was yet to elapse before the final consummation.

The Sibylline books.

But the Sibylline verses, which clearly belong to this period, express, in the most remarkable manner, this spirit of exulting menace at the expected simultaneous fall of Roman idolatry and of Roman empire. The origin of the whole of the Sibylline oracles now extant is not distinctly apparent, either from the style, the manner of composition, or the subject of their predictions (1). It is manifest that they were largely interpolated by the Christians, to a late period, and some of the books can be assigned to no other time but the present (2). Much, no doubt, was of an older date. It is scarcely credible that the fathers of this time would quote cotemporary forgeries as ancient prophecies. The Jews of Alexandria, who had acquired some taste for Grecian poetry, and displayed some talent for the translation of their sacred books into the Homeric language and metre (3), had, no doubt, set the example of versifying their own prophecies, and perhaps of ascribing them to the Sibyls, whose names were universally venerated, as revealing to mankind the secrets of futurity. They may have begun with comparing their own prophets with these ancient seers, and spoken of the predictions of Isaiah or Ezekiel as their Sibylline verses, which may have been another word for prophetic or oracular.

Almost every region of Heathenism boasts its Sibyl. Poetic predictions, ascribed to these inspired women, were either published or religiously preserved in the sacred archives of the cities. No where were they held in such awful reverence as in Rome. The opening of the Sibylline books was an event of rare occurrence, and only at seasons of fearful disaster or peril. Nothing would be more tempting to the sterner or more ardent Christian, than to enlist, as it were, on this side, these authorised Pagan interpreters of futurity; to extort, as it were, from their own oracles, this confession of their approaching dissolution. Nothing, on the other hand, would more strongly excite the mingled feelings of apprehension and animosity in the minds of the Pagans, than this profanation, as it would seem, whether they disbelieved or credited

(1) The first book, to page 176., may be Jewish; it then becomes Christian, as well as the second. But in these books there is little prophecy; it is in general the Mosaic history, in Greek hexameters. If there are any fragments of Heathen verses, they are in the third book.

(2) *Ad horum imperatorum (Antonini Pii cum liberis suis M. Aurelio et Lucio Vero) tempora videntur Sibyllarum vaticinia tantum extendi; id quod etiam e lib. v. videre licet.* Note of the editor, *Opsopæus*, p. 688.

(3) Compare Valckenaer's learned treatise de *Aristobulo Judæo*. The fragments of Ezekiel Tragedus, and many passages, which are evident

versions of the Jewish scriptures, in the works of the fathers, particularly of Eusebius, may be traced to this school. It is by no means impossible that the Pollio of Virgil may owe many of its beauties to those Alexandrian versifiers of the Hebrew prophets. Virgil, who wrought up indiscriminately into his refined gold all the ruder ore which he found in the older poets, may have seen and admired some of these verses. He may have condescended, as he thought, to borrow the images of these religious books of the barbarians, as a modern might the images of the Vedas or of the Koran.

them, of the sacred treasures of prophecy. It was Paganism made to utter, in its most hallowed language, and by its own inspired prophets, its own condemnation; to announce its own immediate downfall, and the triumph of its yet obscure enemy over both its religious and temporal dominion.

The fifth and eighth books of the Sibylline oracles, are those which most distinctly betray the sentiments and language of the Christians of this period (1). In the spirit of the Jewish prophets, they denounce the folly of worshipping gods of wood and stone, of ivory, of gold, and silver; of offering incense and sacrifice to dumb and deaf deities. The gods of Egypt and of Greece,—Hercules, Jove, and Mercury,—are cut off. The whole sentiment is in the contemptuous and aggressive tone of the later, rather than the more temperate and defensive argument of the earlier, apologists for Christianity. But the Sibyls are made, not merely to denounce the fall of Heathenism, but the ruin of Heathen states and the desolation of Heathen cities. Many passages relate to Egypt, and seem to point out Alexandria, with Asia Minor, the cities of which, particularly Laodicea, are frequently noticed, as the chief staple of these poetico-prophetic forgeries (2). The following passage might almost seem to have been written after the destruction of the Serapeum by Theodosius (3). “Isis, thrice hapless goddess, thou shalt remain alone on the shores of the Nile, a solitary Mænad by the sands of Acheron. No longer shall thy memory endure upon the earth. And thou, Serapis, that retest upon thy stones, much must thou suffer; thou shalt be the mightiest ruin in thrice hapless Egypt; and those, who worshipped thee for a god, shall know thee to be nothing. And one of the linen-clothed priests shall say, Come, let us build the beautiful temple of the true

(1) Lib. v. p. 557.

(2) *Θμοῦις καὶ Ξοῦις θλίβεται, καὶ κόπτεται.*  
*Βουλὴ Ἡρακλέους τε Διὸς τε καὶ Ἑρμείω.*—P. 558.

The first of these lines is mutilated.

(3) *Ἴσι, διὰ τριτάλαινα, μενεῖς δ' ἐπὶ χεύμασι Νείλου,*  
*Μούνη, μαινὰς ἄτακτος, ἐπὶ φαρμάβοις Ἀχέροντος,*  
*Κοῦκέτι σου μενεῖα γέ μενεῖ κατὰ γαίαν ἅπασαν.*  
*Καὶ σὺ Σέραπι, λίθοις ἐπικείμενε, πολλὰ μογήσεις,*  
*Κεῖσθι πτώμα μέγιστον, ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τριταλίην.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Γινώσκονται σε τὸ μηδέν, ὅσοι Θεὸν ἐξύμνησαν.*  
*Καί τις ἐρεῖ τῶν ἱερέων λινδόσσιος ἀνὴρ.*  
*Δεῦτε Θεοῦ τέμενος καλοῦ στήθωμεν ἀληθές,*  
*Δεῦτε τὸν ἐκ προγόνων δεινὸν νόμον ἀλλάξωμεν,*  
*Τοῦ χάριν ἢ λιθίνους καὶ ὀστρακίνοισι θεοῖσι*  
*Πομπὰς καὶ τελετὰς ποιοῦμενοι οὐκ ἐνόησαν,*  
*Στρέψωμεν ψυχὰς, Θεὸν ἀσθιτὸν ἐξυμνοῦντες.*  
*Αὐτὸν τὸν γενετῆρα, τὸν αἰδίου γεγαῶτα,*  
*Τὸν πρυτανὶν πάντων, τὸν ἀληθεῖα, τὸν βασιλῆα.*  
*Ψυχροτρόγον γενετῆρα, Θεὸν μέγαν, αἰὲν ἰόντα.*

God; let us change the awful law of our ancestors, who, in their ignorance, made their pomps and festivals to gods of stone and clay; let us turn our hearts, hymning the Everlasting God, the Eternal Father, the Lord of all, the True, the King, the Creator and Preserver of our souls, the Great, the Eternal God."

A bolder prophet, without doubt writing precisely at this perilous crisis, dares, in the name of Sibyl, to connect together the approaching fall of Rome and the gods of Rome. "O, haughty Rome, the just chastisement of Heaven shall come down upon thee from on high; thou shalt stoop thy neck, and be levelled with the earth; and fire shall consume thee, razed to thy very foundations; and thy wealth shall perish; wolves and foxes shall dwell among thy ruins, and thou shalt be desolate as if thou hadst never been. Where then will be thy Palladium? Which of thy gods of gold, or of stone, or of brass, shall save thee? Where then the decrees of thy senate? Where the race of Rhea, of Saturn, or of Jove; all the lifeless deities thou hast worshipped, or the shades of the deified dead? When the thrice five gorgeous Cæsars (the twelve Cæsars usually so called, with Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian), who have enslaved the world from east to west, shall be, one will arise silver-helmed, with a name like the neighbouring sea (Hadrian and the Hadriatic Sea) (1)." The poet describes the busy and lavish character of Hadrian, his curiosity in prying into all religious mysteries, and his deification of Antinous (2).

"After him shall reign three, *whose times shall be the last* (3). \* \* \* Then from the uttermost parts of the earth, whither

- (1) Ἡξεῖ σοι ποτ' ἄνθρην ἴση, ὑψαύχενε Ῥώμη,  
Οὐράνιος πληγὴ, καὶ κάμψεις αὐχένα πρώτην,  
Κάζεδαφισθήσῃ, καὶ πῦρ σε ὅλην δαπανήσῃ  
Κεκλιμένην ἐδάφουσιν ἑοῖς, καὶ πλοῦτος ὀλεῖται,  
Καὶ σά θεμέθλα λύκοι, καὶ ἀλώπεκες οἰκήσουσι.  
Καὶ τότε ἔση πανέρηνμος ὅλως, ὡς μὴ γεγονοῦα.  
Ποῦ τότε Παλλάδιον; ποῖός σε θεὸς διασώσῃ,  
Χρυσοῦς, ἢ λίθινος, ἢ χάλκεος; ἢ τότε ποῦ σοι  
Δόγματα συγκλήτου; ποῦ, Ρεῖης, ἢ Κρίνοιο,  
Ἢ δὲ Διὸς γενεή, καὶ πάντων ὧν ἐσεβάζσθῃς  
Δαίμονας ἀψύχους, νεκρῶν εἶδωλα καμύντων;

Ἄλλ' ὅτε σοι βασιλεῖς χλιδανοὶ τρεῖς πέντε γέγονται,  
Κόσμον δουλώσαντες ἀπ' ἀντολῆς μέχρι δυσμῶν,  
Ἔσσετ' ἀναξ πολιοῦκρανος, ἔχων πέλας οὐνομα πόντου.

Lib. viii. p. 679.

The ruin of Rome, and the restoration of Europe to the East, are likewise alluded to in the following passages. Lib. iii. p. 404—408; v. 573—576.; viii. 694. 712. 718.

There is another allusion to Hadrian, lib. v. p. 552., much more laudatory. Ἔσται καὶ πανάριστος ἀνῆις.

- (2) Κόσμον ἐποπτεύων μιὰρῶ ποδὶ, δῶρα πορίζων  
\* \* \* \* \*

Καὶ μαγικῶν ἀδύτων μυστήρια πάντα μεθέξει,  
Παιδὰ θεὸν δεικνύσει, ἅπαντα σεβάσματα λύσει.—P. 688.

- (3) Τὸν μετὰ τρεῖς ἄρξουσι, πανύστατον ἢ μαρ ἔχοντες—

One of these three is to be an old man, to heap up vast treasures, in order to surrender them to the eastern destroyer, Nero—



he fled, shall the matricide (Nero) return (1). And now, O king of Rome shalt thou mourn, disrobed of the purple laticlave of thy rulers, and clad in sackloth. The glory of thy eagle-bearing legions shall perish. Where shall be thy might? what land, which thou hast enslaved by thy vain laurels, shall be thine ally? For there shall be confusion on all mortals over the whole earth, when the Almighty Ruler comes, and seated upon his throne, judges the souls of the quick and of the dead, and of the whole world. There shall be wailing and scattering abroad, and ruin, when the fall of the cities shall come, and the abyss of earth shall open."

In another passage, the desolation of Italy, the return of Nero, the general massacre of kings, are pourtrayed in fearful terms. The licentiousness of Rome is detailed in the blackest colours. "Sit silent in thy sorrow, O guilty and luxurious city; the vestal virgins shall no longer watch the sacred fire; thy house is desolate (2)." Christianity is then represented under the image of a pure and heaven-descending temple, embracing the whole human race.

Whether these prophecies merely embodied, for the private edification, the sentiments of the Christians, they are manifest indications of these sentiments; and they would scarcely be concealed with so much prudence and discretion, as not to transpire among adversaries, who now began to watch them with jealous vigilance: if they were boldly published, for the purpose of con-

ἰν' ὅταν γ' ἀπανέλθῃ  
Ἐκ περάτων γαίης ὁ φυγὰς μητροκτόνος ἔλθῶν.  
Καὶ τότε πενθήσεις, πλατυ πόρφυρον ἡγεμονίῳ  
Φῶς ἐκδυσσάμενη, καὶ πένθιμον εἶμα φερούσα.

Καὶ γὰρ αἰετοφόρων λεγεῶνων δόξα πεσεῖται.  
Πού τότε σοι τὸ κράτος; ποῖα γῇ σύμμαχος ἔσται,  
Δουλαθεῖσα τειρὶς ματαιορροσύνῃσιν ἀδέσμως;  
Πάσης γὰρ γαίης θνητῶν τότε σύγχυσις ἔσται,  
Αὐτὸς παντοκράτωρ ὅταν ἔλθῶν βήμασι κρίνῃ  
Ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν ψυχὰς, καὶ κόσμον ἅπαντα.

Ἐκ τότε σοι βρυγμὸς, καὶ σκορπισμὸς, καὶ ἄλγους,  
Πτῶσις ὅταν ἔλθῃ πόλεον, καὶ χάσματα γαίης.

Lib. viii. 688.

(1) The strange notion of the flight of Nero beyond the Euphrates, from whence he was to return as Antichrist, is almost the burthen of the Sibylline verses. Compare lib. iv. p. 520—525; v. 573., where there is an allusion to his theatrical tastes, 619—714. The best commentary is that of St. Augustin on the Thessalonians, "Et tunc revelabitur ille iniquus. Ego prorsus quid dixerit me fateor ignorare. Suspiciones tamen hominum, quas vel audire vel legere de hac re potui, non tacebo. Quidam putant hoc de imperio dictum fuisse Romano; et propterea Paulum Apostolum non id aperte scribere voluisse, ne calumniam videlicet incurreret quod Romano imperio male optaverit, cum speraretur æternum: ut hoc quod dixit, 'Jam enim mysterium iniquitatis operatur,' Neronein voluerit intelligi, cuius jam facta velut Antichristi videbantur; unde

nonnulli ipsum resurrecturum et futurum Antichristum suspicantur. Alii vero nec eum occisum putant, sed subtractum potius, ut putaretur occisus; et vivum occultari in vigore ipsius ætatis, in qua fuit cum crederetur extinctus, donec suo tempore reveletur, et restituatur in regnum." According to the Sibyls, Nero was to make an alliance with the kings of the Medes and Persians; return at the head of a mighty army; accomplish his favourite scheme of digging through the isthmus of Corinth, and then conquer Rome. For the manner in which Neander traces the germ of this notion in the Apocalypse, see Pflanzung, der Chr. Kirche, ii. 327. Nero is Antichrist in the political verses of Commodianus. xli.

(2) Lib. v. p. 621.

verting the Heathen, they would be still more obnoxious to the general indignation and hatred. However the more moderate and rational, probably the greater number, of the Christians might deprecate these dangerous and injudicious effusions of zeal, the consequences would involve all alike in the indiscriminating animosity which they would provoke; and, whether or not these predictions were contained in the Sibylline poems, quoted by all the early writers, by Justin Martyr, by Clement, and by Origen, the attempt to array the authority of the Sibyls against that religion and that empire, of which they were before considered almost the tutelary guardians, would goad the rankling aversion to violent resentment.

The general superiority assumed in any way by Christianity, directly it came into collision with the opposite party, would of itself be fatal to the peace which it had acquired in its earlier obscurity.

Change in  
the cir-  
cumstan-  
ces of the  
times.

Of all pretensions, man is most jealous of the claim to moral superiority. II. The darkening aspect of the times wrought up this growing alienation and hatred to open and furious hostility. In the reign of M. Aurelius, we approach the verge of that narrow oasis of peace which intervenes between the final conquests of Rome and the recoil of repressed and threatening barbarism upon the civilisation of the world. The public mind began to be agitated with gloomy rumours from the frontier, while calamities, though local, yet spread over wide districts, shook the whole Roman people with apprehension. Foreign and civil wars, inundations, earthquakes, pestilences, which we shall presently assign to their proper dates, awoke the affrighted empire from its slumber of tranquillity and peace (1).

The emperor Marcus reposed not, like his predecessor, in his Lanuvian villa, amid the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, or with the great jurisconsults of the time, meditating on a general system of legislation. The days of the second Numa were gone by, and the philosopher must leave his speculative school and his Stoic friends to place himself at the head of the legions. New levies invade the repose of peaceful families; even the public amusements are encroached upon, the gladiators are enrolled to serve in the army (2).

Terror of  
the Roman  
world.

It was at this unexpected crisis of calamity and terror, that superstition, which had slept in careless and Epicurean forgetfulness of its gods, suddenly awoke, and when it fled for succour to the altar of the tutelar deity, found the temple deserted and the shrine neglected. One portion of society stood aloof in sullen disregard or avowed contempt of rites so imperiously demanded by the avenging gods. If, in the time of public distress, true religion inspires serene re-

(1) Tillemont, Hist. des Emp. ii. 593.

(2) Fuit enim populo hic sermo, cum sustulisset ad bellum gladiatores quod populum sublati

voluptatibus vellet cogere ad philosophiam. Jul. Cap. p. 204.

signation to the Divine will, and receives the awful admonition to more strenuous and rigid virtue; superstition shudders at the manifest anger of the gods, yet looks not within to correct the offensive guilt, but abroad, to discover some gift or sacrifice which may appease the Divine wrath, and bribe back the alienated favour of Heaven. Rarely does it discover any offering sufficiently costly, except human life. The Christians were the public and avowed enemies of the gods; they were the self-designated victims, whose ungrateful atheism had provoked, whose blood might avert, their manifest indignation. The public religious ceremonies, the sacrifices, the games, the theatres, afforded constant opportunities of inflaming and giving vent to the paroxysms of popular fury, with which it disburdened itself of its awful apprehensions. The cry of "The Christians to the lions!" was now no longer the wanton clamour of individual or party malice; it was not murmured by the interested, and eagerly re-echoed by the blood-thirsty, who rejoiced in the exhibition of unusual victims; it was the deep and general voice of fanatic terror, solemnly demanding the propitiation of the wrathful gods, by the sacrifice of these impious apostates from their worship (1). The Christians were the authors of all the calamities which were brooding over the world, and in vain their earnest apologists appealed to the prosperity of the empire, since the appearance of Christ, in the reign of Augustus, and showed that the great enemies of Christianity, the emperors Nero and Domitian, were likewise the scourges of mankind (2).

III. Was then the philosopher superior to the vulgar superstition? In what manner did his personal character affect the condition of the Christians? Did he authorise, by any new edict, a general and systematic persecution, or did he only give free scope to the vengeance of the awe-struck people, and countenance the timid or fanatic concessions of the provincial governors to the riotous demand of the populace for Christian blood? Did he actually repeal or suspend, or only neglect to enforce, the milder edicts of his predecessors, which secured to the Christians a fair and public trial before the legal tribunal (3)? The acts ascribed to Marcus Aurelius, in the meager and unsatisfactory annals of his reign, are at issue with the sentiments expressed in his grave and lofty Meditations. He assumes, in his philosophical lucubrations,

3. The character of the Emperor.

(1) The miracle of the thundering legion (see *postea*), after having suffered deadly wounds from former assailants, was finally transfigured by the critical spear of Moyle. (Works, vol. ii.) Is it improbable that it was invented or wrought up, from a casual occurrence, into its present form, as a kind of counterpoise to the reiterated charge which was advanced against the Christians, of having caused, by their impiety, all the calamities inflicted by the barbarians on the empire?

(2) Melito apud Routh, *Reliq. Sacr.* 1. 114. Compare Tertullian, *Apologet.* v.

(3) There is an edict of the Emperor Aurelian in the genuine acts of St. Symphorian, in which Pagi, Ruinart, and Neander (i. 106.), would read the name of M. Aurelius instead of Aurelianus. Their arguments are, in my opinion, inclusive, and the fact that Aurelian is named among the persecuting Emperors in the treatise ascribed to Lactantius (*de Mort. Persecutor.*), in which his edicts (*scripta*) against the Christians are distinctly named, outweighs their conjectural objections.



which he dictated during his campaigns upon the Danube, the tone of profound religious sentiment, but proudly disclaims the influence of superstition upon his mind. Yet in Rome, he either shared or condescended to appear to share, all the terrors of the people. The pestilence, said to have been introduced from the East by the soldiers, on their return from the Parthian campaign, had not yet ceased its ravages, when the public mind was thrown into a state of the utmost depression by the news of the Marcomannic war. M. Aurelius, as we shall hereafter see, did not, in his proper person, countenance, to the utmost, the demands of the popular superstition. For all the vulgar arts of magic, divination, and vaticination, the Emperor declares his sovereign contempt; yet on that occasion besides the public religious ceremonies, to which we shall presently allude, he is said himself to have tampered with the dealers in the secrets of futurity; to have lent a willing ear to the prognostications of the Chaldeans, and to the calculations of astrology. If these facts be true, and all this was not done in mere compliance with the general sentiment, the serene composure of Marcus himself may at times have darkened into terror; his philosophic apathy may not always have been exempt from the influence of shuddering devotion. In issuing an edict against the Christians, Marcus may have supposed that he was consulting the public good, by conciliating the alienated favour of the gods. But the superiority of the Christians to all the terrors of death appears at once to have astonished and wounded the Stoic pride of the Emperor. Philosophy, which was constantly dwelling on the solemn question of the immortality of the soul, could not comprehend the eager resolution with which the Christian departed from life; and in the bitterness of jealousy sought out unworthy motives for the intrepidity which it could not emulate. "How great is that soul which is ready, if it must depart from the body, to be extinguished, to be dispersed, or still to subsist! and this readiness must proceed from the individual judgment, not from mere obstinacy, like the Christians, but deliberately, solemnly, and without tragic display (1)." The Emperor did not choose to discern that it was in the one case the doubt, in the other the assurance, of the eternal destiny of the soul, which constituted the difference. Marcus, no doubt, could admire, not merely the dignity with which the philosopher might depart on his uncertain but necessary disembarkation from the voyage of life, and the bold and fearless valour with

Private sentiments of the Emperor, in his Meditations.

(1) The Emperor's Greek is by no means clear in this remarkable passage. *Ψιλήν παράταξιν* is usually translated as in the text "mere obstinacy." A recent writer renders it "ostentation or parade." I suspect an antithesis with *ἰδίωνης κρίσεως*, and that it refers to the manner in which the Christians arrayed themselves as a body

against the authority of the persecutors; and should render the words omitted in the text *ὥστε καὶ ἄλλον πείσαι*, and without that tragic display which is intended to persuade others to follow our example. The Stoic pride would stand alone in the dignity of an intrepid death.

which his own legionaries or their barbarous antagonists could confront death on the field of battle ; but, at the height of his wisdom, he could not comprehend the exalted enthusiasm with which the Christian trusted in the immortality and blessedness of the departed soul in the presence of God.

There can be little doubt that Marcus Antonius issued an edict by which the Christians were again exposed to all the denunciations of common informers, whose zeal was now whetted by some share, if not by the whole, of the confiscated property of delinquents. The most distinguished Christians of the East were sacrificed to the base passions of the meanest of mankind, by the Emperor, who, with every moral qualification to appreciate the new religion, closed his ears, either in the stern apathy of Stoic philosophy, or the more engrossing terrors of Heathen bigotry.

It is remarkable how closely the more probable records of Christian martyrology harmonise with the course of events, during the whole reign of M. Aurelius, and illustrate and justify our view of the causes and motives of their persecution (1).

It was on the 7th March, 161, that the elder Antoninus, in the charitable words of a Christian apologist, sunk in death into the sweetest sleep (2), and M. Aurelius assumed the reins of empire. He immediately associated with himself the other adopted son of Antonine, who took the name of L. Verus. One tréacherous year of peace gave the hope of undisturbed repose, under the beneficent sway which carried the maxims of a severe and humane philosophy into the administration of public affairs. Mild to all lighter delinquencies, but always ready to mitigate the severity of the law ; the Emperor was only inexorable to those more heinous offences which endanger the happiness of society. While the Emperor himself superintended the course of justice, the senate resumed its ancient honours. The second year of his reign, the horizon began to darken. During the reign of the first Antonine, earthquakes, which shook down some of the Asiatic cities, and fires, which ravaged those of the West, had excited considerable alarm ; but these calamities assumed a more dire and destructive character during the reign of Aurelius. Rome itself was first visited with a terrible inundation (3). The Tiber swept away all the cattle in the neighbourhood, threw down a great number of buildings ; among the rest, the magazines and granaries of corn, which were chiefly situated on the banks of the river. This appalling event was followed

A. D. 161.

A. D. 162.

(1) A modern writer, M. Ripault (*Hist. Philosophique de Marc Aurele*), ascribes to this time the memorable passage of Tertullian's apology — "Existiment omnis publicæ cladis, omnis popularis incommodi, Christianos esse causam. Si Tiberis ascendit in mœnia, si Nilus non ascendit in arva, si cælum stetit, si terra movit, si fumes, si lues, statim Christianos ad leonem." Tout ce qui suit les cultes de l'empire, s'élève de toutes

parts contre les Chrétiens. On attribue à ce qu'on appelle leur impiété, le déchaînement des fléaux, sous lesquels gémissent tous les hommes sans privilège ni exemption, sans distinction de religion. ii. 86. Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.* ii. 609.

(2) Quadratus apud Xiphilin. *Antonin.* 3.

(3) Capitol. M. Antonin. p. 168.

A. D. 166.  
Calamities  
of the em-  
pire.

by a famine, which pressed heavily on the poorer population of the capital. At the same time, disturbances took place in Britain; the Catti, a German tribe, ravaged Belgium; and the Parthian war, which commenced under most disastrous circumstances, the invasion of Syria, and the loss of three legions, demanded the presence of his colleague in the empire. Though the event was announced to be prosperous, yet intelligence of doubtful and hard-won victories seemed to intimate that the spell of Roman conquest was beginning to lose its power (1). After four years, Verus returned, bearing the trophies of victory; but, at the same time, the seeds of a calamity, which outweighed all the barren honours which he had won on the shores of the Euphrates. His army was infected with a pestilence, which superstition ascribed to the plunder of a temple in Seleucia or Babylonia. The rapacious soldiers had opened a mystic coffer, inscribed with magical signs, from which issued a pestilential air, which laid waste the whole world. This fable is a vivid indication of the state of the public mind (2). More rational observation traced the fatal malady from Ethiopia, and Egypt to the Eastern army, which it followed from province to province, mouldering away its strength as it proceeded, even to the remote frontiers of Gaul and the northern shores of the Rhine. Italy felt its most dreadful ravages, and in Rome itself the dead bodies were transported out of the city not on the decent bier, but heaped up in waggons. Famine aggravated the miseries, and, perhaps, increased the virulence, of the plague (3). Still the hopes of peace began to revive the drooping mind; and flattering medals were struck, which promised the return of golden days. On a sudden, the empire was appalled with the intelligence of new wars in all quarters. The Moors laid waste the fertile provinces of Spain; a rebellion of shepherds withheld the harvests of Egypt from the capital. Their defeat only added to the dangerous glory of Avidius Cassius, who, before long, stood forth as a competitor for the empire. A vast confederacy of nations, from the frontiers of Gaul to the borders of Illyricum, comprehending some of the best-known and most formidable of the German tribes, with others, whose dissonant races were new to the Roman ears, had arisen with a simultaneous movement (4). The armies were wasted with the Parthian campaigns, and the still more destructive plague. The Marcomannic has been

(1) *Sed in diebus Parthici belli, persecutiones Christianorum, quartâ jam post Neronem vice, in Asiâ et Galliâ graves præcepto ejus extiterunt, multique sanctorum martyrio coronati sunt.* This loose language of Orosius (for the persecution in Gaul, if not in Asia, was much later than the Parthian war,) appears to connect the calamities of Rome with the persecutions.

(2) This was called the *annus calamitosus*. There is a strange story in Capitolinus of an impostor who harangued the populace, from the

wild fig-tree in the Campus Martius, and asserted that if, in throwing himself from the tree, he should be turned into a stork, fire would fall from heaven, and the *end of the world* was at hand, —ignem de cælo lapsurum finemque mundi affore diceret. As he fell, he loosed a stork from his bosom. Aurelius on his confession of the imposture, released him. *Cap. Anton. 13.*

(3) *Julius Cap. Ant. Phil. 21.*

(4) See the List in *Capitol. p. 200.*



compared with the second Punic war, though, at the time, even in the paroxysm of terror, the pride of Rome would probably not have ennobled an irruption of barbarians, however formidable, by such a comparison. The presence of both the Emperors was immediately demanded. Marcus, indeed, lingered in Rome, probably to enrol the army; (for which purpose he swept together recruits from all quarters, and even robbed the arena of its bravest gladiators,) certainly to perform the most solemn and costly religious ceremonies. Every rite was celebrated which could propitiate the Divine favour, or allay the popular fears. Priests were summoned from all quarters; foreign rites performed (1); lustrations and funeral banquets for seven days purified the infected city. It was, no doubt, on this occasion that the unusual number of victims provoked the sarcastic wit, which insinuated that if the Emperor returned victorious, there would be a dearth of oxen (2). Precisely at this time, the Christian martyrologies date the commencement of the persecution under Aurelius. In Rome itself, Justin, the apologist of Christianity, either the same or the following year, ratified with his blood the sincerity of his belief in the doctrines for which he had abandoned the Gentile philosophy. His death is attributed to the jealousy of Crescens, a Cynic, whose audience had been drawn off by the more attractive tenets of the Christian Platonist. Justin was summoned before Rusticus, one of the philosophic teachers of Aurelius, the prefect of the city, and commanded to perform sacrifice. On his refusal, and open avowal of his Christianity, he was scourged, and put to death. It is by no means improbable that, during this crisis of religious terror, mandates should have been issued to the provinces to imitate the devotion of the capital, and every where to appease the offended gods by sacrifice. Such an edict, though not designating them by name, would, in its effects, and perhaps in intention, expose the Christians to the malice of their enemies. Even if the provincial governors were left of their own accord to imitate the example of the Emperor, their own zeal or loyalty would induce them to fall in with the popular current; and the lofty humanity which would be superior at once to superstition, to interest, and to the desire of popularity, which would neglect the opportunity of courting the favour of the Emperor and the populace, would be a rare and singular virtue upon the tribunal of a provincial ruler.

The persecution raged with the greatest violence in Asia Minor. It was here that the new edicts were promulgated, so far departing

Christian  
martyr-  
doms.  
A. D. 161.

Persecu-  
tion in  
Asia Mi-  
nor.

(1) *Peregrinos ritus impleverit*. Such seems the uncontested reading in the Augustan history; yet the singular fact that at such a period the Emperor should introduce foreign rites, as well as the unusual expression, may raise a suspicion that some word, with an opposite meaning, is the genuine expression of the author.

(2) This early pasquinade was couched in the form of an address from the white oxen to the Emperor. If you conquer, we are undone. Οἱ βόες οἱ λευκοὶ Μαρκῶ τῷ Καίσαρι, ἀνδρὲς σὺ νικήσῃς, ἡμεῖς ἀπώλουμεθα. *Ann. Marc.* xxv. 4.

from the humane regulations of the former Emperors, that the prudent apologists venture to doubt their emanating from the imperial authority (1). By these rescripts, the delators were again let loose, and were stimulated by the gratification of their rapacity as well as of their revenge, out of the forfeited goods of the Christian victims of persecution.

Polycarp.

The fame of the aged Polycarp, whose death the sorrowing church of Smyrna related in an epistle to the Christian community at Philomelium or Philadelphia, which is still extant, and bears every mark of authenticity (2), has obscured that of the other victims of Heathen malice or superstition. Of these victims, the names of two only have survived; one who manfully endured, the other who timidly apostatised in the hour of trial. Germanicus appeared; was forced to descend into the arena; he fought gallantly, until the merciful Proconsul entreated him to consider his time of life. He then provoked the tardy beast, and in an instant obtained his immortality. The impression on the wondering people was that of indignation rather than pity. The cry was redoubled, "Away with the godless! let Polycarp be apprehended!" The second, Quintus, a Phrygian, had boastfully excited the rest to throw themselves in the way of the persecution. He descended, in his haste, into the arena; the first sight of the wild-beasts so overcame his hollow courage, that he consented to sacrifice.

Polycarp was the most distinguished Christian of the East; he had heard the Apostle St. John; he had long presided, with the most saintly dignity, over the see of Smyrna. Polycarp neither ostentatiously exposed himself, nor declined such measures for security as might be consistent with his character. He consented to retire into a neighbouring village, from which, on the intelligence of the approach of the officers, he retreated to another. His place of concealment being betrayed by two slaves, whose confession had been extorted by torture, he exclaimed, "The will of God be done;" ordered food to be prepared for the officers of justice; and requested time for prayer, in which he spent two hours. He was placed upon an ass, and on a day of great public concourse, conducted towards the town. He was met by Herod the Irenarch, and his father Nicetas, who took him, with considerate respect, into their own carriage, and vainly endeavoured to persuade him to submit to the two tests by which the Christians were tried, the salutation of the Emperor by the title of Lord, and sacrifice. On his determinate refusal, their compassion gave place to contumely; he was hastily thrust out of the chariot, and conducted to the crowded stadium. On the entrance of the old man upon the public scene, the excited devotion of the Christian spectators imagined that they

(1) Melito apud Euseb. E. H. iv. 20.

(2) In Cotelerii Patres Apostolici, ii. 195.

heard a voice from heaven, "Polycarp, be firm!" The Heathen, in their vindictive fury, shouted aloud, that Polycarp had been apprehended. The merciful Proconsul entreated him, in respect to his old age, to disguise his name. He proclaimed aloud that he was Polycarp; the trial proceeded. "Swear," they said, "by the Genius of Cæsar; retract, and say, away with the godless." The old man gazed in sorrow at the frantic and raging benches of the spectators, rising above each other, and with his eyes uplifted to heaven, said, "Away with the godless!" The Proconsul urged him further—"Swear, and I release thee; blaspheme Christ." "Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and he has never done me an injury; how can I blaspheme my King, and my Saviour?" The Proconsul again commanded him to swear by the Genius of Cæsar. Polycarp replied, by avowing himself a Christian, and by requesting a day to be appointed on which he might explain before the Proconsul the blameless tenets of Christianity. "Persuade the people to consent," replied the compassionate, but overawed ruler. "We owe respect to authority; to thee I will explain the reasons of my conduct, to the populace I will make no explanation." The old man knew too well the ferocious passions raging in their minds, which it had been vain to attempt to allay by the rational arguments of Christianity. The Proconsul threatened to expose him to the wild beasts. "'Tis well for me to be speedily released from this life of misery." He threatened to burn him alive. "I fear not the fire that burns for a moment; thou knowest not that which burns for ever and ever." His countenance was full of peace and joy, even when the herald advanced into the midst of the assemblage, and thrice proclaimed—"Polycarp has professed himself a Christian." The Jews and Heathens (for the former were in great numbers, and especially infuriated against the Christians) replied with an overwhelming shout, "This is the teacher of all Asia, the overthrower of our gods, who has perverted so many from sacrifice and the adoration of the gods." They demanded of the Asiarch, the president of the games, instantly to let loose a lion upon Polycarp. He excused himself by alleging that the games were over. A general cry arose that Polycarp should be burned alive. The Jews were again as vindictively active as the Heathens in collecting the fuel of the baths, and other combustibles, to raise up a hasty yet capacious funeral pile. He was speedily unrobed; he requested not to be nailed to the stake; he was only bound to it.

The calm and unostentatious prayer of Polycarp may be considered as embodying the sentiments of the Christians of that period. "O Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy well-beloved and ever blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of thee; the God of angels, powers, and of every creature,



and of the whole race of the righteous who live before thee, I thank thee that thou hast graciously thought me worthy of this day and this hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of thy martyrs, and drink of Christ's cup, for the resurrection to eternal life, both of body and soul, in the incorruptibleness of the Holy Spirit; among whom may I be admitted this day, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, as thou, O true and faithful God, hast prepared, and foreshown and accomplished. Wherefore I praise thee for all thy mercies; I bless thee; I glorify thee, with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, to whom, with thee and the Holy Spirit, be glory now and for ever."

The fire was kindled in vain. It arose curving like an arch around the serene victim, or, like a sail swelling with the wind, left the body unharmed. To the sight of the Christians, he resembled a treasure of gold or silver (an allusion to the gold tried in the furnace); and delicious odours, as of myrrh or frankincense, breathed from his body. An executioner was sent in to despatch the victim; his side was pierced, and blood enough flowed from the aged body to extinguish the flames immediately around him (1).

The whole of this narrative has the simple energy of truth: the prudent yet resolute conduct of the aged bishop; the calm and dignified expostulation of the governor; the wild fury of the populace; the Jews eagerly seizing the opportunity of renewing their unslaked hatred to the Christian name, are described with the simplicity of nature. The supernatural part of the transaction is no more than may be ascribed to the high-wrought imagination of the Christian spectators, deepening every casual incident into a wonder. The voice from heaven, heard only by Christian ears; the flame from the hastily piled wood, arching over the unharmed body; the grateful odours, not impossibly from aromatic woods, which were used to warm the baths of the more luxurious, and which were collected for the sudden execution; the effusion of blood (2), which might excite wonder from the decrepit frame of a man at least a hundred years old. Even the vision of Polycarp himself (3), by which he was forewarned of his approaching fate, was not unlikely to arise before his mind at that perilous crisis. Polycarp closed the nameless train of Asiatic martyrs (4).

Some few years after, the city of Smyrna was visited with a terrible earthquake; a generous sympathy was displayed by the inhabitants of the neighbouring cities; provisions were poured in from

(1) The Greek account adds a dove, which soared from his body, as it were his innocent departing soul. For *περίσπερα* however has been very ingeniously substituted *ἐπ' ἀριστερα*. See Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, i 316.

(2) According to the great master of nature, Lady Macbeth's diseased memory is haunted with a similar circumstance, at the murder of

Duncan. "Who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him." Macbeth, act v. s. 1.

(3) The difficulty of accurately reconciling the vision with its fulfilment has greatly perplexed the writers who insist on its preternatural origin. Jortin, p. 307.

(4) *Καταταύτι τὸν διωγμὸν.*

all quarters; homes were offered to the houseless; carriages furnished to convey the infirm and the children from the scene of ruin. They received them as if they had been their parents or children. The rich and the poor vied in the offices of charity; and, in the words of the Grecian sophist, thought that they were receiving rather than conferring a favour (1). A Christian historian may be excused if he discerns in this humane conduct the manifest progress of Christian benevolence; and that benevolence, if not unfairly ascribed to the influence of Christianity, is heightened by the recollection that the sufferers were those whose amphitheatre had so recently been stained with the blood of the aged martyr. If, instead of beholding the retributive hand of divine vengeance in the smouldering ruins of the city, they hastened to alleviate the common miseries of Christian and of Pagan, with equal zeal and liberality, it is impossible not to trace at once the extraordinary revolution in the sentiments of mankind, and the purity of the Christianity which was thus so superior to those passions which have so often been fatal to its perfection.

At this period of enthusiastic excitement—of superstition on the one hand, returning in unreasoning terror to its forsaken gods, and working itself up by every means to a consolatory feeling of the divine protection; of religion, on the other, relying in humble confidence on the protection of an all-ruling Providence; when the religious parties were, it might seem, aggrandising their rival deities, and tracing their conflicting powers throughout the whole course of human affairs; to every mind each extraordinary event would be deeply coloured with supernatural influence; and whenever any circumstance really bore a providential or miraculous appearance, it would be ascribed by each party to the favouring interposition of its own god.

Such was the celebrated event which was long current in Christian history as the legend of the thundering legion (2). Heathen historians, medals still extant, and the column which bears the name of Antoninus at Rome, concur with Christian tradition in commemorating the extraordinary deliverance of the Roman army, during the war with the German nations, from a situation of the utmost peril and difficulty. If the Christians at any time served in the imperial armies (3)—if military service was a question, as seems extremely probable, which divided the early Christians (4), some considering it too closely connected with the idolatrous practices of an oath to the fortunes of Cæsar, and the worship of the

Miracle of  
the thun-  
dering  
legion.

(1) Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.* ii. p. 687. The philosopher Aristides wrote an oration on this event.

(2) See Moyle's Works, vol. ii. Compare *Routh, Reliq. Sacra*, i. 153., with authors quoted.

(3) Tertullian, in a passage already quoted, states distinctly *militemus vobiscum*.

(4) Neander has developed this notion with his usual ability, in this part of his History of the Church.

standards, which were to the rest of the army, as it were, the household gods of battle; while others were less rigid in their practice, and forgot their piety in their allegiance to their sovereign, and their patriotism to their country; at no time were the Christians more likely to overcome their scruples than at this critical period. The armies were recruited by unprecedented means; and many Christians, who would before have hesitated to enroll themselves, might less reluctantly submit to the conscription, or even think themselves justified in engaging in what appeared necessary and defensive warfare. There might then have been many Christians in the armies of M. Aurelius,—but that they formed a whole separate legion, is manifestly the fiction of a later age. In the campaign of the year 174, the army advanced incautiously into a country entirely without water; and, in this faint and enfeebled state, was exposed to a formidable attack of the whole barbarian force. Suddenly, at their hour of most extreme distress, a copious and refreshing rain came down, which supplied their wants; and while their half recruited strength was still ill able to oppose the onset of the enemy, a tremendous storm, with lightning and hailstones of an enormous size, drove full upon the adversary, and rendered his army an easy conquest to the reviving Romans (1). Of this awful, yet seasonable interposition, the whole army acknowledged the preternatural, the divine, origin. By those of darker superstition, it was attributed to the incantations of the magician Arnuphis, who controlled the elements to the service of the Emperor. The medals struck on the occasion, and the votive column erected by Marcus himself, render homage to the established deities, to Mercury and to Jupiter (2). The more rational Pagans, with a flattery which received the suffrage of admiring posterity, gave the honour to the virtues of Marcus, which demanded this signal favour from approving Heaven (3). The Christian, of course, looked alone to that one Almighty God whose providence ruled the whole course of nature, and saw the secret operation of his own prayers meeting with the favourable acceptance of the Most High (4) “While the Pagans ascribed the honour of this deliverance to their own Jove,” writes Tertullian, “they unknowingly bore testimony to the Christian’s God.”

The latter end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius (5) was signalled

(1) In the year after this victory (A. D. 175.), the formidable rebellion of Avidius Cassius disturbed the East, and added to the perils and embarrassments of the empire.

(2) Mercury, according to Pagi, appears on one of the coins relating to this event. Compare Reading’s note in Routh, l. c.

(3) Lampridius (in vit.) attributes the victory to the Chaldeans. Marcus, de Scipio (l. i. c. 6.), allows that he had the magician Arnuphis in his army.

Chaldeæ mago cœu carmina ritu  
Armavere Deos, seu, quod reor, omne Tonantis  
Obsequium Marci mores potuere mereri.

Claud. vi. Cons. Hon.

(4) In Jovis nomine Deo nostro testimonium reddidit. Tertullian ad Scapulam, p. 20. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. v. 5.

(5) If we had determined to force the events of this period into an accordance with our own view of the persecutions of M. Aurelius, we might have adopted the chronology of Dodwell, who



by another scene of martyrdom, in a part of the empire far distant from that where persecution had before raged with the greatest violence, though not altogether disconnected from it by the original descent of the sufferers (1).

The Christians of Lyons and Vienne appear to have been a religious colony from Asia Minor or Phrygia, and to have maintained a close correspondence with those distant communities. There is something remarkable in the connection between these regions and the East. To this district the two Herods, Archelaus and Herod Antipas, were successively banished; and it is singular enough, that Pontius Pilate, after his recall from Syria, was exiled to the same neighbourhood.

Martyrs of  
Vienne.  
A. D. 177.

There now appears a Christian community, corresponding in Greek with the mother church (2). It is by no means improbable that a kind of Jewish settlement of the attendants on the banished sovereigns of Judæa might have been formed in the neighbourhood of Vienne and Lyons, and maintained a friendly, no doubt a mercantile, connection with their opulent brethren of Asia Minor, perhaps through the port of Marseilles. Though Christianity does not appear to have penetrated into Gaul till rather a late period (3), it may have travelled by the same course, and have been propagated in the Jewish settlement by converts from Phrygia or Asia Minor. Its Jewish origin is, perhaps, confirmed by its adherence to the Judæo-Christian tenet of abstinence from blood (4).

The commencement of this dreadful, though local persecution, was an ebullition of popular fury. It was about the period when the German war, which had slumbered during some years of precarious peace, again threatened to disturb the repose of the empire. Southern Gaul, though secure beyond the Rhine, was yet at no great distance from the incursions of the German tribes; and it is possible that personal apprehensions might mingle with the general fanatic terror, which exasperated the Heathens against their Christian fellow-citizens. The Christians were on a sudden exposed to a general attack of the populace. Clamours soon grew to personal violence; they were struck, dragged about the streets, plundered, stoned, shut up in their houses, until the more merciful hostility of the ruling authorities gave orders for their arrest and imprisonment until the arrival of the governor. One man of birth and rank, Vettius Epagathus, boldly undertook their defence against

assigns the martyrs of Lyons to the year 167: but the evidence seems in favour of the later date, 177. See Mosheim. Lardner, who, if not by his critical sagacity, commands authority by his scrupulous honesty, says, "Nor do I expect that any learned man, who has a concern for his reputation as a writer, should attempt a direct confutation of this opinion." Works, 4to edit. i. 360.

(1) Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. 1.

(2) *Epistola Viennensium et Lugdunensium*, in Routh, i. 265.

(3) *Serius Alpes transgressa*, is the expression of a Christian writer, Sulpicius Severus.

(4) "How can those eat infants to whom it is not lawful to eat the blood of brutes?" Compare, however, Tertullian's apology, ch. 9., and Origen contra Celsum, viii.; from whence it appears that this abstinence was more general among the early Christians.

the vague charges of atheism and impiety : he was charged with being himself a Christian, and fearlessly admitted the honourable accusation. The greater part of the christian community adhered resolutely to their belief ; the few whose courage failed in the hour of trial, and who purchased their security by shameful submission, nevertheless did not abandon their more courageous and suffering brethren ; but, at considerable personal danger, continued to alleviate their sufferings by kindly offices. Some Heathen slaves were at length compelled, by the dread of torture, to confirm the odious charges which were so generally advanced against the Christians : —banquets on human flesh ; promiscuous and incestuous concubinage ; Thyestean feasts, and OEdipodean weddings. The extorted confessions of these miserable men exasperated even the more moderate of the Heathens, while the ferocious populace had now free scope for their sanguinary cruelty. The more distinguished victims were Sanctus, a deacon of Vienne ; a new convert named Maturus, and Attalus, of Phrygian descent, from the city of Pergamus. They were first tortured by means too horrible to describe—if, without such description, the barbarity of the persecutors, and the heroic endurance of the Christian martyrs, could be justly represented. Many perished in the suffocating air of the noisome dungeons, many had their feet strained to dislocation in the stocks ; the more detested victims, after every other means of torture were exhausted, had hot plates of iron placed upon the most sensitive parts of their bodies.

Among these victims was the aged Bishop of Lyons, Pothinus, now in his ninetieth year, who died in prison after two days, from the ill usage which he had received from the populace. His feeble body had failed, but his mind remained intrepid ; when the frantic rabble envired him with their insults, and demanded with contumelious cries, “ Who is the God of the Christians ? ” he calmly replied, “ Wert thou worthy, thou shouldst know.”

But the amphitheatre was the great public scene of popular barbarity and of Christian endurance. They were exposed to wild-beasts, which, however, do not seem to have been permitted to despatch their miserable victims, and made to sit in a heated iron chair, till their flesh reeked upwards with an offensive odour.

A rescript of the Emperor, instead of allaying the popular frenzy, gave ample license to its uncontrolled violence. Those who denied the faith were to be released ; those who persisted in it, condemned to death.

Martyr-  
dom of  
Blaudina.

But the most remarkable incident in this fearful and afflicting scene, and the most characteristic of the social change which Christianity had begun to work, was this, that the chief honours of this memorable martyrdom were assigned to a female and a slave. Even the Christians themselves scarcely appear aware of the deep and

universal influence of their own sublime doctrines. The mistress of Blandina, herself a martyr, trembled lest the weak body and, still more, the debased condition of the lowly associate in her trial, might betray her to criminal concession. Blandina shared in all the most excruciating sufferings of the most distinguished victims ; she equalled them in the calm and unpretending superiority to every pain which malice, irritated and licensed, as it were, to exceed, if it were possible, its own barbarities on the person of a slave, could invent. She was selected by the peculiar vengeance of the persecutors, whose astonishment probably increased their malignity, for new and unprecedented tortures, which she bore with the same equable magnanimity.

Blandina was first led forth with Sanctus, Maturus, and Attalus ; and, no doubt, the ignominy of their public exposure was intended to be heightened by their association with a slave. The wearied executioners wondered that her life could endure during the horrid succession of torments which they inflicted. Blandina's only reply was, "I am a Christian, and no wickedness is practised among us."

In the amphitheatre, she was suspended to a stake, while the combatants, Maturus and Sanctus, derived vigour and activity from the tranquil prayers which she uttered in her agony ; and the less savage wild-beasts kept aloof from their prey. A third time she was brought forth, as a public exhibition of suffering, with a youth of fifteen, named Ponticus. During every kind of torment, her language and her example animated the courage and confirmed the endurance of the boy, who at length expired under the torture. Blandina rejoiced at the approach of death, as if she had been invited to a wedding banquet, and not thrown to the wild-beasts. She was at length released. After she had been scourged, placed in the iron chair, enclosed in a net, and, now in a state of insensibility, tossed by a bull, some more merciful barbarian transpierced her with a sword. The remains of all these martyrs, after remaining long unburied, were cast into the Rhone, in order to mock and render still more improbable their hopes of a resurrection.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## FOURTH PERIOD. CHRISTIANITY UNDER THE SUCCESSORS OF M. AURELIUS.

Fourth  
period.

Rapid suc-  
cession of  
Emperors.  
A. D. 180.  
to 284.

SUCH was the state of Christianity at the commencement of the fourth period, between its first promulgation and its establishment under Constantine. The golden days of the Roman empire had already begun to darken, and closed for ever with the reign of Marcus the philosopher. The empire of the world became the prize of bold adventure, or the precarious gift of a lawless soldiery. During little more than a century, from the accession of Commodus to that of Dioclesian, more than twenty Emperors (not to mention the pageants of a day, and the competitors for the throne, who retained a temporary authority over some single province) flitted like shadows along the tragic scene of the imperial palace. A long line of military adventurers, often strangers to the name, to the race, to the language of Rome, — Africans and Syrians, Arabs and Thracians, — seized the quickly shifting sceptre of the world. The change of sovereign was almost always a change of dynasty, or, by some strange fatality, every attempt to re-establish an hereditary succession was thwarted by the vices or imbecility of the second generation. M. Aurelius is succeeded by the brutal Commodus; the vigorous and able Severus by the fratricide Caracalla. One of the imperial historians has made the melancholy observation, that of the great men of Rome scarcely one left a son the heir of his virtues; they had either died without offspring, or had left such heirs, that it had been better for mankind if they had died leaving no posterity (1).

Insecurity  
of the  
throne fa-  
vourable  
to Christi-  
anity.

In the weakness and insecurity of the throne lay the strength and safety of Christianity. During such a period, no systematic policy was pursued in any of the leading internal interests of the empire. It was a government of temporary expedients, of individual passions. The first and commanding object of each succeeding head of a dynasty was to secure his contested throne, and to centre upon himself the wavering or divided allegiance of the provinces. Many of the Emperors were deeply and inextricably involved in foreign wars, and had no time to devote to the social changes within the pale of the empire. The tumults or the terrors of German, or Gothic, or Persian inroad, effected a perpetual diversion from the slow and silent internal aggressions of Christianity. The frontiers constantly and imperiously demanded the presence of the Emperor,

(1) *Neminem prope magnorum virorum optimum et utilem filium reliquisse satis claret. Denique aut sine liberis viri interierunt, aut tales*

*habuerunt plerique, ut melius fuerit de rebus humanis sine posteritate discedere. Spartiani Severas, Aug. Hist. p. 360.*

and left him no leisure to attend to the feeble remonstrances of the neglected priesthood : the dangers of the civil absorbed those of the religious constitution. Thus Christianity had another century of regular and progressive advancement to arm itself for the inevitable collision with the temporal authority, till, in the reign of Dioclesian, it had grown far beyond the power of the most unlimited and arbitrary despotism to arrest its invincible progress ; and Constantine, whatever the motives of his conversion, no doubt adopted a wise and judicious policy, in securing the alliance, rather than continuing the strife, with an adversary which divided the wealth, the intellect, if not the property and the population, of the empire.

The persecutions which took place during this interval were the hasty consequences of the personal hostility of the Emperors, not the mature and deliberate policy of a regular and permanent government. In general, the vices and the detestable characters of the persecutors would tend to vindicate the innocence of Christianity ; and to enlist the sympathies of mankind in its favour, rather than to deepen the general animosity. Christianity, which had received the respectful homage of Alexander Severus, could not lose in public estimation by being exposed to the gladiatorial fury of Maximin. Some of the Emperors were almost as much strangers to the gods as to the people and to the senate of Rome. They seemed to take a reckless delight in violating the ancient majesty of the Roman religion. Foreign superstitions, almost equally new, and scarcely less offensive to the general sentiment, received the public, the pre-eminent, homage of the Emperor. Commodus, though the Grecian Hercules was at once his model, his type, and his deity, was an ardent votary of the Isiac mysteries ; and at the Syrian worship of the Sun, in all its foreign and oriental pomp, Elagabalus commanded the attendance of the trembling senate.

Causes of  
persecu-  
tions  
during  
this pe-  
riod.

If Marcus Aurelius was, as it were, the last effort of expiring Polytheism, or rather of ancient philosophy, to produce a perfect man, according to the highest ideal conception of human reason, the brutal Commodus might appear to retrograde to the savage periods of society. Commodus was a gladiator on the throne ; and if the mind, humanised either by the milder spirit of the times, or by the incipient influence of Christianity, had begun to turn in distaste from the horrible spectacles which flooded the arena with human carnage, the disgust would be immeasurably deepened by the appearance of the Emperor as the chief actor in these sanguinary scenes. Even Nero's theatrical exhibitions had something of the elegance of a polished age ; the actor in one of the noble tragedies of ancient Greece, or even the accomplished musician, might derogate from the dignity of an Emperor, yet might, in some degree, excuse the unseemliness of his pursuits by their intellectual character. But the amusements and public occupations of Com-

Commo-  
dus, A. D.  
180 to 193.

modus had long been consigned by the general contempt and abhorrence to the meanest of mankind, to barbarians and slaves; and were as debasing to the civilised man as unbecoming in the head of the empire (1). The courage which Commodus displayed in confronting the hundred lions which were let loose in the arena, and fell by his shafts (though in fact the imperial person was carefully guarded against real dangers), and the skill with which he clave with an arrow the slender neck of the giraffe, might have commanded the admiration of a flattering court. But when he appeared as a gladiator, gloried in the acts, and condescended to receive the disgraceful pay of a profession so infamous as to degrade for ever the man of rank or character who had been forced upon the stage by the tyranny of former Emperors, the courtiers, who had been bred in the severe and dignified school of the philosopher, must have recoiled with shame, and approved, if not envied, the more rigid principles of the Christians, which kept them aloof from such degrading spectacles. Commodus was an avowed proselyte of the Egyptian religion, but his favourite god was the Grecian Hercules. He usurped the attributes and placed his own head on the statues of this deity, which was the impersonation, as it were, of brute force and corporeal strength. But a deity which might command adoration in a period of primæval barbarism, when man lives in a state of perilous warfare with the beasts of the forest, in a more intellectual age sinks to his proper level. He might be the appropriate god of a gladiator, but not of a Roman Emperor (2).

Every thing which tended to desecrate the popular religion to the feelings of the more enlightened and intellectual must have strengthened the cause of Christianity; the more the weaker parts of Paganism, and those most alien to the prevailing sentiment of the times, were obtruded on the public view, the more they must have contributed to the advancement of that faith which was rapidly attaining to the full growth of a rival to the established religion. The subsequent deification of Commodus, under the reign of Severus, in wanton resentment against the senate (3), prevented his odious memory from sinking into oblivion. His insults upon the more rational part of the existing religion could no longer be forgotten, as merely emanating from his personal character. Commodus advanced into a god, after his death, brought disrepute upon the whole Polytheism of the empire. Christianity was perpetually, as it were, at hand, and ready to profit by every favourable juncture.

(1) *Ælii Lampridii, Commodus, in August. Hist.*

(2) In the new fragments of Dion Cassius recovered by M. Mai there is an epigram pointed against the assumption of the attributes of Hercules by Commodus. The Emperor had placed his own head on the colossal statue of Hercules, with the inscription—*Lucius Commodus Hercules.*

Διὸς παῖς Καλλιγίκος Ἡρακλῆς,  
Οὐκ εἰμι Λεύκιος, ἀλλ' ἀναγκάζουσι με.

The point is not very clear, but it seems to be a protest of the God against being confounded with the Emperor. Mai, *Fragm. Vatic. ii. 225.*

(3) *Spartiani Severus, Hist. Aug. p. 345.*



By a singular accident, the ruffian Commodus was personally less inimically disposed to the Christians than his wise and amiable father. His favourite concubine, Martia, in some manner connected with the Christians, mitigated the barbarity of his temper, and restored to the persecuted Christians a long and unbroken peace, which had been perpetually interrupted by the hostility of the populace, and the edicts of the government in the former reign. Christianity had no doubt been rigidly repelled from the precincts of the court during the life of Marcus, by the predominance of the philosophic faction. From this period, a Christian party occasionally appears in Rome : many families of distinction and opulence professed Christian tenets, and it is sometimes found in connection with the imperial family. Still Rome, to the last, seems to have been the centre of the Pagan interest, though other causes will hereafter appear for this curious fact in the conflict of the two religions.

Severus wielded the sceptre of the world with the vigour of the older empire. But his earlier years were occupied in the establishment of his power over the hostile factions of his competitors, and by his Eastern wars ; his later by the settlement of the remote province of Britain (1). Severus was at one time the protector, at another the persecutor, of Christianity. Local circumstances appear to have influenced his conduct, on both occasions, to the Christian party. A Christian named Proculus, a dependent, probably, upon his favourite freed slave Evodus, had been so fortunate as to restore him to health by anointing him with oil, and was received into the imperial family, in which he retained his honourable situation till his death. Not improbably through the same connection, a Christian nurse and a Christian preceptor formed the disposition of the young Caracalla ; and, till the natural ferocity of his character ripened under the fatal influence of jealous ambition, fraternal hatred, and unbounded power, the gentleness of his manners, and the sweetness of his temper, enchanted and attached his family, his friends, the senate, and the people of Rome. The people beheld with satisfaction the infant pupil of Christianity turning aside his head and weeping at the barbarity of the ordinary public spectacles, in which criminals were exposed to wild-beasts (2). The Christian interest at the court repressed the occasional outbursts of popular animosity : many Christians of rank and distinction enjoyed the avowed favour of the Emperor. Their security may partly be attributed to their calm determination not to mingle themselves up with the contending factions for the empire. During the conflict of parties, they had refused to espouse the cause either of Niger or Albinus. Retired within themselves, they rendered their prompt and cheerful obedience to the ruling Emperor. The implacable vengeance which

Reign of  
Severus.  
A. D. 194.  
to 210.

Infancy of  
Caracalla.

Peaceful  
conduct of  
the Chris-  
tians.

(1) Compare Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, (2) Spartian. *Anton. Caracalla*, p. 404.  
iii. part 1. p. 146.

Severus wreaked on the senate, for their real or suspected inclination to the party of Albinus, his remorseless execution of so many of the noblest of the aristocracy, may have placed in a stronger light the happier fortune, and commended the unimpeachable loyalty, of the Christians. The provincial governors, as usual, reflected the example of the court; some adopted merciful expedients to avoid the necessity of carrying the laws into effect against those Christians who were denounced before their tribunals; while the more venal humanity of others extorted a considerable profit from the Christians for their security. The unlawful religion, in many places, purchased its peace at the price of a regular tax, which was paid by other illegal, and mostly infamous, professions. This traffic with the authorities was sternly denounced by some of the more ardent believers, as degrading to the religion, and an ignominious barter of the hopes and glories of martyrdom (1).

Persecu-  
tion in the  
East.

A. C. 202.

Christi-  
anity not  
persecuted  
in the  
West.

Probable  
causes.

Egypt.

Such was the flourishing and peaceful state of Christianity during the early part of the reign of Severus. In the East, at a later period, he embraced a sterner policy. During the conflict with Niger, the Samaritans had espoused the losing, the Jews the successful, party. The edicts of Severus were, on the whole, favourable to the Jews, but the prohibition to circumcise proselytes was re-enacted during his residence in Syria, in the tenth year of his reign. The same prohibition against the admission of new proselytes was extended to the Christians. But this edict may have been intended to allay the violence of the hostile factions in Syria. Of the persecution under Severus there are few, if any, traces in the West (2). It is confined to Syria, perhaps Cappadocia, to Egypt, and to Africa; and, in the latter provinces, appears as the act of hostile governors, proceeding upon the existing laws, rather than the consequence of any recent edict of the Emperor. The Syrian Eusebius may have exaggerated local acts of oppression, of which the sad traces were recorded in his native country, into a general persecution: he admits that Alexandria was the chief scene of Christian suffering. The date and the scene of the persecution may lend a clue to its origin. From Syria, the Emperor, exactly at this time, proceeded to Egypt. He surveyed, with wondering interest, the monuments of Egyptian glory and of Egyptian superstition (3), the temples of Memphis, the Pyramids, the Labyrinth, the Memnonium. The plague alone prevented him from continuing his excursions into Ethiopia. The dark and relentless mind of Severus appears to have been strongly impressed with the religion of Serapis. In either character, as the

(1) Sed quid non timiditas persuadebit, quasi et fugere scriptura permittat, et redimere precipiat.\*\*\* Nescio dolendum an erubescendum sit cum in matricibus beneficiariorum et curiosorum, inter tabernarios et lanios et fures balnearum et aleones et lenones, Christiani quoque vectigales continentur. Tertull. de fuga, c. 13.

(2) Nous ne trouvons rien de considérable touchant les martyrs que la persécution de Sévère a pu faire à Rome et en Italie. Tillemont. St. Andeole, and the other martyrs in Gaul (Tillemont, p. 160.), are of more than suspicious authority.

(3) Spartan, Hist. Aug. p. 553.

great Pantheistic deity, which absorbed the attributes and functions of all the more ancient gods of Egypt, or in his more limited character, as the Pluto of their mythology, the lord of the realm of departed spirits, Serapis (1) was likely to captivate the imagination of Severus, and to suit those gloomier moods in which it delighted in brooding over the secrets of futurity; and, having realised the proud prognostics of greatness, which his youth had watched with hope, now began to dwell on the darker omens of decline and dissolution (2). The hour of imperial favour was likely to be seized by the Egyptian priesthood to obtain the mastery, and to wreak their revenge on this new foreign religion, which was making such rapid progress throughout the province, and the whole of Africa. Whether or not the Emperor actually authorised the persecution, his countenance would strengthen the Pagan interest, and encourage the obsequious Præfect (3) in adopting violent measures. Lætus would be vindicating the religion of the Emperor in asserting the superiority of Serapis; and the superiority of Serapis could be by no means so effectually asserted, as by the oppression of his most powerful adversaries. Alexandria was the ripe and pregnant soil of religious feud and deadly animosity. The hostile parties which divided the city—the Jews, the Pagans, and the Christians—though perpetually blending and modifying each other's doctrines, and forming schools in which Judaism allegorised itself into Platonism, Platonism having assimilated itself to the higher Egyptian mythology, soared into Christianity, and a Platonic Christianity, from a religion, became a mystic philosophy—awaited, nevertheless, the signal for persecution, and for license to draw off in sanguinary factions, and to settle the controversies of the schools by bloody tumults in the streets (4). The perpetual syncretism of opinions instead of leading to peace and charity, seemed to inflame the deadly animosity; and the philosophical spirit which attempted to blend all the higher doctrines into a lofty Eclectic system, had no effect in harmonising the minds of the different sects to mutual toleration and amity. It was now the triumph of Paganism. The controversy with Christianity was carried on by burning their priests and torturing their virgins, until the catechetical or elementary schools of learning, by which the Alexandrian Christians trained up their pupils for the reception of their more mysterious doctrines, were deserted, the young Origen alone laboured, with indefatigable and successful ac-

(1) Compare de Guignaut, *Serapis et son Origine*.

(2) Spartian had the advantage of consulting the autobiography of the Emperor Severus. Had time but spared us the original, and taken the whole Augustan history in exchange!

(3) His name was Lætus. Euseb. *Ecl. Hist.* vi. 2.

(4) Leonidas, the father of Origen, perished in this persecution. Origen was only kept away

from joining him in his imprisonment, and if possible, in his martyrdom, by the prudent stratagem of his mother, who concealed all his clothes. The boy of seventeen sent a letter to his father, entreating him not to allow his parental affection for himself and his six brothers to stand in his way of obtaining the martyr's crown. Euseb. vi. 2. The property of Leonidas was confiscated to the imperial treasury. *Ibid.*



tivity, to supply the void caused by the general desertion of the persecuted teachers (1).

Africa.

The African Præfect followed the example of Lætus in Egypt. In no part of the Roman empire had Christianity taken more deep and permanent root than in the province of Africa, then crowded with rich and populous cities, and forming, with Egypt, the granary of the Western world; but which many centuries of Christian feud, Vandal invasion, and Mahometan barbarism, have blasted to a thinly-peopled desert. Up to this period, this secluded region had gone on advancing in its uninterrupted course of civilisation. Since the battle of Munda, the African province had stood aloof from the tumults and desolation which attended the changes in the imperial dynasty. As yet it had raised no competitor for the empire, though Severus, the ruling monarch, was of African descent. The single legion, which was considered adequate to protect its remote tranquillity from the occasional incursions of the Moorish tribes, had been found sufficient for its purpose. The Paganism of the African cities was probably weaker than in other parts of the empire. It had no ancient and sacred associations with national pride. The new cities had raised new temples, to gods foreign to the region. The religion of Carthage (2), if it had not entirely perished with the final destruction of the city, maintained but a feeble hold upon the Italianised inhabitants. The Carthage of the empire was a Roman city. If Christianity tended to mitigate the fierce spirit of the inhabitants of these burning regions, it acquired itself a depth and impassioned vehemence, which perpetually broke through all restraints of moderation, charity, and peace. From Tertullian to Augustine, the climate seems to be working into the language, into the essence of Christianity. Here disputes madden into feuds; and feuds, which, in other countries, were allayed by time, or died away of themselves, grew into obstinate, implacable, and irreconcilable factions.

African  
Christianity.

African Christianity had no communion with the dreamy and speculative genius of the East. It sternly rejected the wild and poetic impersonations, the daring cosmogonies, of the Gnostic sects: it was severe, simple, practical, in its creed; it governed by its strong and imperious hold upon the feelings, by profound and agitating emotion. It eagerly received the rigid asceticism of the antimaterialist system, while it disdained the fantastic theories by which it accounted for the origin of evil. The imagination had another office than that of following out its own fanciful creations; it spoke directly to the fears and to the passions; it delighted in realising the terrors of the final judgment; in arraying, in the most appalling language, the gloomy mysteries of future retribution.

(1) Euseb. Eccles. Hist. vi. 2.

(2) Compare Munter, Relig. der Carthager. The worship of the *Dea cœlestis*, the Queen of Heaven, should perhaps be excepted. See, for-

ward, the reign of Elagabalus. Even in the fifth century the Queen of Heaven, according to Salvian (*de Gubernatione Dei*, lib. viii.), shared the worship of Carthage with Christ.

This character appears in the dark splendour of Tertullian's writings; engages him in contemptuous and relentless warfare against the Gnostic opinions, and their latest and most dangerous champion, Marcion; till, at length, it hardens into the severe, yet simpler, enthusiasm of Montanism. It appears allied with the stern assertion of ecclesiastical order and sacerdotal domination, in the earnest and zealous Cyprian; it is still manifestly working, though in a chastened and loftier form, in the deep and impassioned, but comprehensive, mind of Augustine.

Tertullian alone belongs to the present period, and Tertullian is, perhaps, the representative and the perfect type of this Africanism. It is among the most remarkable illustrations of the secret unity which connected the whole Christian world, that opinions first propagated on the shores of the Euxine found their most vigorous antagonist on the coast of Africa, while a new and fervid enthusiasm, which arose in Phrygia, captivated the kindred spirit of Tertullian. Montanism harmonised with African Christianity in the simplicity of its creed, which did not depart from the predominant form of Christianity; in the extreme rigour of its fasts (for while Gnosticism outbid the religion of Jesus and his Apostles, Montanism outbid the Gnostics in its austerities (1); it admitted marriage as a necessary evil, but it denounced second nuptials as an inexpiable sin) (2); above all, in its resolving religion into inward emotion. There is a singular correspondence between Phrygian Heathenism and the Phrygian Christianity of Montanus and his followers. The Orgiasm, the inward rapture, the working of a divine influence upon the soul, till it was wrought up to a state of holy frenzy, had continually sent forth the priests of Cybele, and females of a highly excitable temperament, into the Western provinces (3); whom the vulgar beheld with awe, as manifestly possessed by the divinity; whom the philosophic party, equally mistaken, treated with contempt, as imposters. So, with the followers of Montanus (and women were his most ardent votaries), with Prisca and Maximilla, the apostles of his sect, the pure, and meek, and peaceful spirit of Christianity became a wild, a visionary, a frantic enthusiasm: it worked paroxysms of intense devotion; it made the soul partake of all the fever of phy-

Montan-  
ism

(1) The Western churches were, as yet, generally averse to the excessive fasting subsequently introduced to so great an extent, by the monastic spirit. See the curious vision of Attalus, the martyr of Lyons, in which a fellow-prisoner, Alcibiades, who had long lived on bread and water alone, was reproved for not making free use of God's creatures; and thus giving offence to the church. The churches of Lyons and Vienne having been founded from Phrygia, were anxious to avoid the least imputation of Montanism. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. 3.

(2) The prophetesses abandoned their husbands, according to Apollonius apud Euseb. v. 18.

(3) The effect of natural character and temperament on the opinions and form of religion did not escape the observation of the Christian writers. There is a curious passage on the Phrygian national character in Socrates, H. E. iv. 28.—“The Phrygians are a chaste and temperate people; they seldom swear; the Scythians and Thracians are cholerick; the Eastern nations more disposed to immorality; the Paphlagonians and Phrygians to neither: they do not care for the theatre or the games; prostitution is unusual.” Their suppressed passions seem to have broken out at all periods in religious emotions.

sical excitement. As in all ages, where the mild and rational faith of Christ has been too calm and serene for persons brooding to madness over their own internal emotions, it proclaimed itself a religious advancement, a more sublime and spiritual Christianity. Judaism was the infancy, Christianity the youth, the revelation of the Spirit the manhood of the human soul. It was this Spirit, this Paraclete, which resided in all its fulness in the bosom of Montanus; his adversaries asserted that he gave himself out as the Paraclete; but it is more probable that his vague and mystic language was misunderstood, or, possibly misrepresented, by the malice of his adversaries. In Montanism the sectarian, the exclusive spirit, was at its height; and this claim to higher perfection, this seclusion from the vulgar race of Christians, whose weakness had been too often shown in the hour of trial; who had neither attained the height of his austerity, nor courted martyrdom, nor refused all ignominious compromises with the persecuting authorities with the unbending rigour which he demanded, would still further commend the claims of Montanism to the homage of Tertullian.

Apology  
of Tertul-  
lian.

During this persecution, Tertullian stood forth as the apologist of Christianity; and the tone of his apology is characteristic not only of the individual, but of his native country, while it is no less illustrative of the altered position of Christianity. The address of Tertullian to Scapula, the Præfect of Africa, is no longer in the tone of tranquil expostulation against the barbarity of persecuting blameless and unoffending men, still less that of humble supplication. Every sentence breathes scorn, defiance, menace. It heaps contempt upon the gods of Paganism; it avows the determination of the Christians to expel the *dæmons* from the respect and adoration of mankind. It condescends not to exculpate the Christians from being the cause of the calamities which had recently laid waste the province; the torrent rains which had swept away the harvests; the fires which had heaped with ruin the streets of Carthage; the sun which had been preternaturally eclipsed, when at its meridian, during an assembly of the province at Utica. All these portentous signs are unequivocally ascribed to the vengeance of the Christian's God, visiting the guilt of obstinate idolatry. The persecutors of the Christians are warned by the awful examples of Roman dignitaries who had been stricken blind, and eaten with worms, as the chastisement of Heaven for their injustice and cruelty to the worshippers of Christ. Scapula himself is sternly admonished to take warning by their fate; while the orator, by no means deficient, at the same time, in dexterous address, reminds him of the humane policy of others:—"Your cruelty will be our glory. Thousands of both sexes, and of every rank, will eagerly crowd to martyrdom, exhaust your fires, and weary your swords. Carthage must be decimated; the principal persons in the city, even, per-



haps, your own most intimate friends and kindred, must be sacrificed. Vainly will you war against God. Magistrates are but men, and will suffer the common lot of mortality; but Christianity will endure as long as the Roman empire, and the duration of the empire will be coeval with that of the world."

History, even Christian history, is confined to more general views of public affairs, and dwells too exclusively on what may be called the high places of human life; but whenever a glimpse is afforded of lowlier, and of more common life, it is, perhaps, best fulfilling its office of presenting a lively picture of the times, if it allows itself occasionally some more minute detail, and illustrates the manner in which the leading events of particular periods affected individuals not in the highest station.

Of all the histories of martyrdom, none is so unexaggerated in its tone and language, so entirely unincumbered with miracle; none abounds in such exquisite touches of nature, or, on the whole, from its minuteness and circumstantiality, breathes such an air of truth and reality, as that of Perpetua and Felicitas, two African females. Their death is ascribed, in the Acts, to the year of the accession of Geta (1), the son of Severus. Though there was no general persecution at that period, yet, as the Christians held their lives, at all times, liable to the outburst of popular resentment, or the caprice of an arbitrary proconsul, there is much probability that a time of general rejoicing might be that in which the Christians, who were always accused of a disloyal reluctance to mingle in the popular festivities, and who kept aloof from the public sacrifices on such anniversaries, would be most exposed to persecution. The youthful catechumens, Revocatus and Felicitas, Saturninus and Secundulus, were apprehended, and with them Vivian Perpetua, a woman of good family, liberal education, and honourably married. Perpetua was about twenty-two years old; her father and mother were living; she had two brothers,—one of them, like herself, a catechumen,—and an infant at her breast. The history of the martyrdom is related by Perpetua herself, and is said to have been written by her own hand: — "When we were in the hands of the persecutors, my father, in his tender affection, persevered in his endeavours to pervert me from the faith (1). ' My

Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas.

A. D. 202.

(1) The external evidence to the authenticity of these Acts is not quite equal to the internal. They were first published by Lucas Holstenius, from a MS. in the convent of Monte Casino; re-edited by Valesius at Paris, and by Ruinart, in his *Acta Sincera Martyrum*, p. 90., who collated two other MSS. There appear, however, strong indications that the Acts of these African Martyrs are translated from the Greek; at least it is difficult otherwise to account for the frequent untranslated Greek words and idioms in the text. The following are examples: C. iii. *turbatum beneficio*, χαρίν· c. iv. *bene venisti*, τεγνω, τικνόν· viii. in oramate, a vision, ὄραματι·

diadema, or diastema, an interval, διαστήμα· c. x. *afe*, ἀφ· xii. *agios*, agios, agios.

There are indeed some suspicious marks of Montanism which perhaps prevented these Acts from being more generally known.

It is not quite clear where these martyrs suffered. Valesius supposed Carthage, others, in that one of the two towns called *Tuburbium* which was situated in proconsular Africa.

(2) *Dejicere*, to cast me down, is the expressive phrase, not uncommon among the early Christians.

father, this vessel, be it a pitcher, or any thing else, can we call it by any other name?' 'Certainly not,' he replied. 'Nor can I call myself by any name but that of Christian?' My father looked as if he could have plucked my eyes out; but he only harassed me, and departed, persuaded by the arguments of the devil. Then, after being a few days without seeing my father, I was enabled to give thanks to God, and his absence was tempered to my spirit. After a few days we were baptized, and the waters of baptism seemed to give power of endurance to my body. Again a few days, and we were cast into prison. I was terrified; for I had never before seen such total darkness. O miserable day! — from the dreadful heat of the prisoners crowded together, and the insults of the soldiers. But I was wrung with solicitude for my infant. Two of our deacons, however, by the payment of money, obtained our removal for some hours in the day to a more open part of the prison. Each of the captives then pursued his usual occupation; but I sate and suckled my infant, who was wasting away with hunger. In my anxiety, I addressed and consoled my mother, and commended my child to my brother; and I began to pine away at seeing them pining away on my account. And for many days I suffered this anxiety, and accustomed my child to remain in the prison with me; and I immediately recovered my strength, and was relieved from my toil and trouble for my infant, and the prison became to me like a palace; and I was happier there than I should have been any where else.

"My brother then said to me, 'Perpetua, you are exalted to such dignity, that you may pray for a vision, and it shall be shown you whether our doom is martyrdom or release.'" This is the language of Montanism; but the vision is exactly that which might haunt the slumbers of the Christian in a high state of religious enthusiasm; it showed merely the familiar images of the faith, arranging themselves into form. She saw a lofty ladder of gold, ascending to heaven; around it were swords, lances, hooks; and a great dragon lay at its foot, to seize those who would ascend. Saturus, a distinguished Christian, went up first; beckoned her to follow, and controlled the dragon by the name of Jesus Christ. She ascended, and found herself in a spacious garden, in which sate a man with white hair, in the garb of a shepherd, milking his sheep (1), with many myriads around him. He welcomed her, and gave her a morsel of cheese; and "I received it with folded hands, and ate it; and all the saints around exclaimed, 'amen.' I awoke at the sound, with the sweet taste in my mouth, and I related it to my brother; and we knew that our martyrdom was at hand, and we began to have no hope in this world."

(1) Bishop Munter, in his *Sinnbilder der alten Christen*, refers to this passage, to illustrate one of the oldest bas reliefs of Christian art. H. i. p. 62.

“After a few days, there was a rumour that we were to be heard. And my father came from the city, wasted away with anxiety, to pervert me; and he said, ‘Have compassion, O my daughter! on my grey hairs; have compassion on thy father, if he is worthy of the name of father. If I have thus brought thee up to the flower of thine age; if I have preferred thee to all thy brothers, do not expose me to this disgrace. Look on thy brother; look on thy mother, and thy aunt; look on thy child, who cannot live without thee. Do not destroy us all.’ Thus spake my father, kissing my hands in his fondness, and throwing himself at my feet; and in his tears he called me not his daughter, but his mistress (*domina*). And I was grieved for the grey hairs of my father, because he alone, of all our family, did not rejoice in my martyrdom: and I consoled him, saying, ‘In this trial, what God wills, will take place. Know that we are not in our own power, but in that of God.’ And he went away sorrowing.

“Another day, while we were at dinner, we were suddenly seized and carried off to trial; and we came to the town. The report spread rapidly, and an immense multitude was assembled. We were placed at the bar; the rest were interrogated, and made their confession. And it came to my turn; and my father instantly appeared with my child, and he drew me down the step, and said in a beseeching tone; ‘Have compassion on your infant;’ and Hilarianus the procurator, who exercised the power of life and death for the Proconsul Timinianus, who had died, said, ‘Spare the grey hairs of your parent; spare your infant; offer sacrifice for the welfare of the Emperor.’ And I answered, ‘I will not sacrifice.’ ‘Art thou a Christian?’ said Hilarianus; I answered, ‘I am a Christian.’ And while my father stood there to persuade me, Hilarianus ordered him to be thrust down, and beaten with rods. And the misfortune of my father grieved me; and I was as much grieved for his old age as if I had been scourged myself. He then passed sentence on us all, and condemned us to the wild-beasts; and we went back in cheerfulness to the prison. And because I was accustomed to suckle my infant, and to keep it with me in the prison, I sent Pomponius the deacon to seek it from my father. But my father would not send it; but, by the will of God, the child no longer desired the breast, and I suffered no uneasiness; lest at such a time I should be afflicted by the sufferings of my child, or by pains in my breasts.”

Her visions now grow more frequent and vivid. The name of her brother Dinocrates suddenly occurred to her in her prayers. He had died at seven years old, of a loathsome disease, no doubt without Christian baptism. She had a vision in which Dinocrates appeared in a place of profound darkness, where there was a pool of water, which he could not reach on account of his small stature.



In a second vision, Dinocrates appeared again; the pool rose up and touched him, and he drank a full goblet of the water. "And when he was satisfied, he went away to play, as infants are wont, and I awoke; and I knew that he was translated from the place of punishment (1)."

Again a few days, and the keeper of the prison, profoundly impressed by their conduct, and beginning to discern "the power of God within them," admitted many of the brethren to visit them, for mutual consolation. "And as the day of the games approached, my father entered, worn out with affliction, and began to pluck his beard, and to throw himself down with his face upon the ground, and to wish that he could hasten his death; and to speak words which might have moved any living creature. And I was grieved for the sorrows of his old age." The night before they were to be exposed in the arena, she dreamed that she was changed to a man; fought and triumphed over a huge and terrible Egyptian gladiator; and she put her foot upon his head, and she received the crown, and passed out of the Vivarian gate, and knew that she had triumphed not over man but over the devil. The vision of Saturus, which he related for their consolation, was more splendid. He ascended into the realms of light, into a beautiful garden, and to a palace, the walls of which were light; and there he was welcomed, not only by the angels, but by all the friends who had preceded him in the glorious career. It is singular that, among the rest, he saw a bishop and a priest, among whom there had been some dissension. And while Perpetua was conversing with them, the angels interfered and insisted on their perfect reconciliation. Some kind of blame seems to be attached to the bishop Optatus, because some of his flock appeared as if they came from the factions of the circus, with the spirit of mortal strife not yet allayed.

The narrative then proceeds to another instance of the triumph of faith over the strongest of human feelings, the love of a young mother for her offspring. Felicitas was in the eighth month of her pregnancy. She feared, and her friends shared in her apprehension, that, on that account, her martyrdom might be delayed. They prayed together, and her travail came on. In her agony at that most painful period of delivery, she gave way to her sufferings. "How then," said one of the servants of the prison, "if you cannot endure these pains, will you endure exposure to the wild-beasts?" She replied, "I bear now my own sufferings; then, there will be one within me who will bear my sufferings for me, because I shall suffer for his sake." She brought forth a girl, of whom a Christian sister took the charge.

Perpetua maintained her calmness to the end. While they were

(1) This is evidently a kind of purgatory.

treated with severity by a tribune, who feared lest they should be delivered from the prison by enchantment, Perpetua remonstrated with a kind of mournful pleasantry, and said that, if ill-used, they would do no credit to the birthday of Cæsar : the victims ought to be fattened for the sacrifice. But their language and demeanour was not always so calm and gentle ; the words of some became those of defiance—almost of insult ; and this is related with as much admiration as the more tranquil sublimity of the former incidents. To the people who gazed on them, in their importunate curiosity, at their agape, they said, “ Is not to-morrow’s spectacle enough to satiate your hate ? To-day you look on us with friendly faces, to-morrow you will be our deadly enemies. Mark well our countenances, that you may know them again on the day of judgment.” And to Hilarianus, on his tribunal, they said, “ Thou judgest us, but God will judge thee.” At this language, the exasperated people demanded that they should be scourged. When taken out to execution they declined, and were permitted to decline, the profane dress in which they were to be clad ; the men, that of the priests of Saturn ; the women, that of the priestesses of Ceres (1). They came forward in their simple attire, Perpetua singing psalms. The men were exposed to leopards and bears ; the women were hung up naked in nets, to be gored by a furious cow. But even the excited populace shrunk with horror at the spectacle of two young and delicate women, one recently recovered from childbirth, in this state. They were recalled by acclamation, and in mercy brought forward again, clad in loose robes (2). Perpetua was tossed, her garment was rent ; but, more conscious of her wounded modesty than of pain, she drew the robe over the part of her person which was exposed. She then calmly clasped up her hair, because it did not become a martyr to suffer with dishevelled locks, the sign of sorrow. She then raised up the fainting and mortally wounded Felicitas, and the cruelty of the populace being for a time appeased, they were permitted to retire. Perpetua seemed wrapt in ecstacy, and as if awaking from sleep, inquired when she was to be exposed to the beast. She could scarcely be made to believe what had taken place ; her last words tenderly admonished her brother to be steadfast in the faith. We may close the scene by intimating that all were speedily released from their sufferings, and entered into their glory. Perpetua guided with her own hand the merciful sword of the gladiator which relieved her from her agony.

This African persecution, which laid the seeds of future schisms and fatal feuds, lasted till, at least, the second year of Caracalla. From its close, except during the short reign of Maximin, Chris-

Caracalla  
Geta.  
A. D. 211  
—217.

(1) This was an unusual circumstance ; and ascribed to the devil.

(2) I am not sure that I am correct in this part

of the version ; it appears to me to be the sense.  
“ Ita revocate discinguntur ” is paraphrased by  
Lucas Holstenius, revocate et discinetis induta.

tianity enjoyed uninterrupted peace till the reign of Decius (1). But, during this period occurred a remarkable event in the religious history of Rome. The pontiff of one of the wild forms of the Nature-worship of the East appeared in the city of Rome as Emperor; the ancient rites of Baalpeor, but little changed in the course of ages, intruded themselves into the sanctuary of the Capitoline Jove, and offended at once the religious majesty and the graver decency of Roman manners (2). Elagabalus derived his name from the Syrian appellative of the sun; he had been educated in the precincts of the temple; and the Emperor of Rome was lost and absorbed in the priest of an effeminate superstition. The new religion did not steal in under the modest demeanour of a stranger, claiming the common rites of hospitality, as the national faith of a subject people: it entered with a public pomp, as though to supersede and eclipse the ancestral deities of Rome. The god Elagabalus was conveyed in solemn procession through the wondering provinces; his symbols were received with all the honour of the Supreme Deity. The conical black stone, which was adored at Emesa, was, no doubt, in its origin, one of those obscene symbols which appear in almost every form of the Oriental nature-worship. The rudeness of ancient art had allowed it to remain in less offensive shapelessness; and, not improbably, the original symbolic meaning had become obsolete. The Sun had become the visible type of Deity, and the object of adoration. The mysterious principle of generation, of which, in the primitive religion of nature, he was the type and image, gave place to the noblest object of human idolatry—the least debasing representative of the Great Supreme. The idol of Emesa entered Rome in solemn procession; a magnificent temple was built upon the Palatine Hill; a number of altars stood round, on which every day the most sumptuous offerings—hecatombs of oxen, countless sheep, the most costly aromatics, the choicest wines were offered; streams of blood and wine were constantly flowing down; while the highest dignitaries of the empire—commanders of legions, rulers of provinces, the gravest senators, appeared as humble ministers, clad in the loose and flowing robes and linen sandals of the East, among the lascivious dances and the wanton music of oriental drums and cymbals. These degrading practices were the only way to civil and military preferment. The whole senate and equestrian order stood around; and those who played ill the part of adoration, or whose secret murmurs incautiously betrayed their devout indignation (for this insult to the ancient religion of Rome awakened some sense of shame in the degenerate and servile aristocracy), were put to death. The most sacred

Elagaba-  
lus empe-  
ror.  
A. D. 218.

(1) From 212 to 249.: — Caracalla, 211; Macrinus, 217; Elagabalus, 218; Alexander Severus, 222, Maximin and the Gordians, 235—244; Philip, 244; Decius, 249.

(2) Lampridii Heliogabalus. Dion Cassius, l. lxxix. Herodian. v.



and patriotic sentiments cherished above all the hallowed treasures of the city, the Palladium, the image of Minerva. Popular veneration worshipped, in distant awe, the unseen deity; for profane eye might never behold the virgin image. The inviolability of the Roman dominion was inseparably connected with the uncontaminated sanctity of the Palladium. The Syrian declared his intention of wedding the ancient tutelary goddess to his foreign deity. The image was publicly brought forth; exposed to the sullyng gaze of the multitude; solemnly wedded, and insolently repudiated by the unworthy stranger. A more appropriate bride was found in the kindred Syrian deity, worshipped under the name of Astarte in the East, in Carthage, as the Queen of Heaven—Venus Urania, as translated into the mythological language of the West. She was brought from Carthage. The whole city—the whole of Italy—was commanded to celebrate the bridal festival; and the nuptials of the two foreign deities might appear to complete the triumph over the insulted divinities of Rome. Nothing was sacred to the voluptuous Syrian. He introduced the manners as well as the religion of the East; his rapid succession of wives imitated the polygamy of an Oriental despot; and his vices not merely corrupted the morals, but insulted the most sacred feelings, of the people. He tore a vestal virgin from her sanctuary, to suffer his polluting embraces; he violated the sanctuary itself; attempted to make himself master of the mystic coffer in which the sacred deposit was enshrined: it was said that the pious fraud of the priesthood deceived him with a counterfeit, which he dashed to pieces in his anger. It was openly asserted, that the worship of the sun, under his name of Elagabalus, was to supersede all other worship. If we may believe the biographies in the Augustan history, a more ambitious scheme of a universal religion had dawned upon the mind of the Emperor; and that the Jewish, the Samaritan, even the Christian, were to be fused and recast into one great system, of which the sun was to be the central object of adoration (1). At all events, the deities of Rome were actually degraded before the public gaze into humble ministers of Elagabalus. Every year of the Emperor's brief reign, the god was conveyed from his Palatine temple to a suburban edifice of still more sumptuous magnificence. The statue passed in a car drawn by six horses. The Emperor of the world, his eyes stained with paint, ran and danced before it with antic gestures of adoration. The earth was strewn with gold dust; flowers and chaplets were scattered by the people, while the images of all the other gods, the splendid ornaments and vessels of all their temples, were carried, like the spoils of subject nations, in the annual ovation of the

Worship  
of the sun  
in Rome.

Religious  
innova-  
tions me-  
ditated by  
Elaga-  
balus.

(1) *Id agens ne quis Romæ Deus nisi Heliogabalus coleretur. Dicebat præterea, Judæorum et Samaritanorum religiones, et Christianam devo-*

*tionem, illuc transferendam, ut omnium cultura-  
rum secretum Heliogabali sacerdotium teneret.*  
p. 461.

Phœnician deity. Even human sacrifices, and if we may credit the monstrous fact, the most beautiful sons of the noblest families, were offered on the altar of this Moloch of the East (1).

It is impossible to suppose that the weak and crumbling edifice of Paganism was not shaken to its base by this extraordinary revolution. An ancient religion cannot thus be insulted without losing much of its majesty : its hold upon the popular veneration is violently torn asunder. With its more sincere votaries, the general animosity to foreign, particularly to Eastern, religions, might be enflamed or deepened ; and Christianity might share in some part of the detestation excited by the excesses of a superstition so opposite in its nature. But others whose faith had been shaken, and whose moral feelings revolted, by a religion whose essential character was sensuality, and whose licentious tendency had been so disgustingly illustrated by the unspeakable pollutions of its imperial patron, would hasten to embrace that purer faith which was most remote from the religion of Elagabalus.

Alexander  
Severus  
Emperor.  
A. D. 222.

From the policy of the court, as well as the pure and amiable character of the successor of Elagabalus, the more offensive parts of this foreign superstition disappeared with their imperial patron. But the old Roman religion was not reinstated in its jealous and unmingled dignity. Alexander Severus had been bred in another school ; and the influence which swayed him, during the earlier part at least of his reign, was of a different character from that which had formed the mind of Elagabalus. It was the mother of Elagabalus who, however she might blush with shame at the impurities of her effeminate son, had consecrated him to the service of the deity in Emesa. The mother of Alexander Severus, the able, perhaps crafty and rapacious, Mammæa, had at least held intercourse with the Christians of Syria. She had conversed with the celebrated Origen, and listened to his exhortations, if without conversion, still not without respect. Alexander, though he had neither the religious education, the pontifical character, nor the dissolute manners, of his predecessor, was a Syrian, with no hereditary attachment to the Roman form of Paganism. He seems to have affected a kind of universalism : he paid decent respect to the gods of the Capitol ; he held in honour the Egyptian worship, and enlarged the temples of Isis and Serapis. In his own palace, with respectful indifference, he enshrined, as it were, as his household deities, the representatives of the different religious or theophilosophic systems which were prevalent in the Roman empire,—Orpheus, Abraham, Christ, and Apollonius of Tyana. The first of these represented the wisdom of the mysteries, the purified nature-worship, which had laboured to elevate the popular mythology into a noble and coherent allegorism.

Mammæa.

(1) Cedit et humanas hostias, lectis ad hoc patrimis et matrimis, credo ut major esset utriusque parenti dolor. Lamprid. Heliogabalus.

It is singular that Abraham, rather than Moses, was placed at the head of Judaism : it is possible that the traditionary sanctity which attached to the first parent of the Jewish people, and of many of the Arab tribes, and which was afterwards embodied in the Mahometan Koran, was floating in the East, and would comprehend, as it were, the opinions not only of the Jews, but of a much wider circle of the Syrian natives. In Apollonius, was centered the more modern Theurgy, the magic which commanded the intermediate spirits between the higher world and the world of man ; the more spiritual polytheism which had released the subordinate deities from their human form, and maintained them in a constant intercourse with the soul of man. Christianity, in the person of its founder, even where it did not command authority as a religion, had nevertheless lost the character under which it had so long and so unjustly laboured, of animosity to mankind. Though he was considered but as one of the sages who shared in the homage paid to their beneficent wisdom, the followers of Jesus had now lived down all the bitter hostility which had so generally prevailed against them. The homage of Alexander Severus may be a fair test of the general sentiment of the more intelligent Heathen of his time (1). It is clear that the exclusive spirit of Greek and Roman civilisation is broken down : it is not now Socrates or Plato, Epicurus or Zeno, who are considered the sole guiding intellects of human wisdom. These Eastern *barbarians* are considered rivals, if not superior, to the philosophers of Greece. The world is betraying its irresistible yearning towards a *religion* ; and these were the first overtures, as it were, to more general submission.

In the reign of Alexander Severus, at least commenced the great change in the outward appearance of Christianity. Christian bishops were admitted, even at the court, in a recognised official character ; and Christian churches began to rise in different parts of the empire, and to possess endowments in land (2). To the astonishment of the Heathen, their religion had as yet appeared without temple or altar ; their religious assemblies had been held in privacy : it was yet a domestic worship. Even the Jew had his public synagogue or his more secluded proseucha ; but where the Christians met was indicated by no separate and distinguished dwelling ; the cemetery of their dead, the sequestered grove, the private chamber, contained their peaceful assemblies. Their privacy was at once their security and their danger. On the one hand, there was no well-known edifice in which the furious and excited rabble could surprise the general

Change in  
the rela-  
tion of  
Christia-  
nity to  
society.

(1) Jablonski wrote a very ingenious essay to show that Alexander Severus was converted to Gnostic Christianity. *Opuscula*, vol. iv. Compare Heyne, *Opuscula*, vi. p. 169, et seqq.

(2) Tillemont, as Gibbon observes, assigns the date of the earliest Christian churches to the reign of Alexander Severus ; Mr. Moyle to that of

Gallienus. The difference is very slight, and after all, the change from a private building, set apart for a particular use, and a public one of no architectural pretensions, may have been almost imperceptible. The passage of Lampridius appears conclusive in favour of Tillemont.



First  
Christian  
churches.

body of the Christians, and wreak its vengeance by indiscriminate massacre ; on the other, the jealousy of the government against all private associations would be constantly kept on the alert ; and a religion without a temple was so inexplicable a problem to Pagan feeling, that it would strengthen and confirm all the vague imputations of Atheism, or of criminal license in these mysterious meetings, which seemed to shun the light of day. Their religious usages must now have become much better known, as Alexander borrowed their mode of publishing the names of those who were proposed for ordination, and established a similar proceeding with regard to all candidates for civil office ; and a piece of ground, in Rome, which was litigated by a company of victuallers, was awarded by the Emperor himself to the Christians, upon the principle that it was better that it should be devoted to the worship of God in any form, than applied to a profane and unworthy use (1).

These buildings were no doubt, as yet, of modest height and unpretending form ; but the religion was thus publicly recognised as one of the various forms of worship which the government did not prohibit from opening the gates of its temples to mankind.

The progress of Christianity during all this period, though silent, was uninterrupted. The miseries which were gradually involving the whole Roman empire, from the conflicts and the tyranny of a rapid succession of masters ; from taxation gradually becoming more grinding and burdensome ; and the still multiplying inroads and expanding devastations of the barbarians, assisted its progress. Many took refuge in a religion which promised beatitude in a future state of being, from the inevitable evils of this life.

Influence  
of Christi-  
anity on  
Heathen-  
ism.

But in no respect is its progress more evident and remarkable than in the influence of Christianity on Heathenism itself. Though philosophy, which had long been the antagonist and most dangerous enemy of the popular religion, now made apparently common cause with it against the common enemy, Christianity ; yet there had been an unperceived and amicable approximation between the two religions. Heathenism, as interpreted by philosophy, almost found favour with some of the more moderate Christian apologists ; while, as we have seen, in the altered tone of the controversy, the Christians have rarely occasion to defend themselves against those horrible charges of licentiousness, incest, and cannibalism, which, till recently, their advocates had been constrained to notice. The Christians endeavoured to enlist the earlier philosophers in their cause ; they were scarcely content with asserting that the nobler Grecian philosophy might be designed to prepare the human mind for the reception of Christianity ; they were almost inclined to endow these sages with a kind of prophetic foreknowledge of its more mysterious

(1) *Ælii Lampridii Alexander Severus.*

doctrines. “I have explained,” says the Christian in Minucius Felix, “the opinions of almost all the philosophers, whose most illustrious glory it is that they have worshipped one God, though under various names; so that one might suppose, either that the Christians of the present day are philosophers, or that the philosophers of old were already Christians (1).”

But these advances on the part of Christianity were more than met by Paganism. The Heathen religion, which prevailed at least among the more enlightened Pagans during this period, and which, differently modified, more fully developed, and, as we shall hereafter find, exalted still more from a philosophy into a religion, Julian endeavoured to reinstate as the established faith, was almost as different from that of the older Greeks and Romans, or even that which prevailed at the commencement of the empire, as it was from Christianity. It worshipped in the same temples; it performed, to a certain extent, the same rites; it actually abrogated the local worship of no one of the multitudinous deities of Paganism. But over all this, which was the real religion, both in theory and practice, in the older times, had risen a kind of speculative Theism, to which the popular worship acknowledged its humble subordination. On the great elementary principle of Christianity, the unity of the Supreme God, this approximation had long been silently made. Celsus, in his celebrated controversy with Origen, asserts that this philosophical notion of the Deity is perfectly reconcileable with Paganism. “We also can place a Supreme Being above the world, and above all human things, and approve and sympathise in whatever may be taught of a spiritual rather than material adoration of the gods; for, with the belief in the gods, worshipped in every land and by every people, harmonises the belief in a Primal Being, a Supreme God, who has given to every land its guardian, to every people its presiding deity. The unity of the Supreme Being, and the consequent unity of the design of the universe, remains, even if it be admitted that each people has its gods, whom it must worship in a peculiar manner, according to their peculiar character; and the worship of all these different deities is reflected back to the Supreme God, who has appointed them, as it were, his delegates and representatives. Those who argue that men ought not to serve many masters impute human weakness to God. God is not jealous of the adoration paid to subordinate deities; he is superior in his nature to degradation and insult. Reason itself might justify the belief in the inferior deities, which are the objects of the established worship. For since the Supreme God can only produce that which is immortal and imperishable, the existence of mortal beings cannot be explained, unless we distinguish from him

Change in  
Heathen-  
ism.

1. I am here again considerably indebted to Tschirner, *Fall des Heidenthums*, p. 334—401.

those inferior deities, and assert them to be the creators of mortal beings and of perishable things (1).

Paganism  
becomes  
serious.

From this time, Paganism has changed not merely some of its fundamental tenets, but its general character; it has become serious, solemn, devout. In Lucian, unbelief seemed to have reached its height, and as rapidly declined. The witty satirist of Polytheism had, no doubt, many admirers; he had no imitators. A reaction has taken place; none of the distinguished statesmen of the third century boldly and ostentatiously, as in the times of the later republic, display their contempt for religion. Epicureanism lost, if not its partisans, its open advocates. The most eminent writers treat religion with decency, if not with devout respect; no one is ambitious of passing for a despiser of the gods. And with faith and piety broke forth all the aberrations of religious belief and devout feeling, wonder-working mysticism, and dreamy enthusiasm, in their various forms (2).

Apollonius  
of Tyana.

This was the commencement of that new Platonism which, from this time, exercised a supreme authority, to the extinction of the older forms of Grecian philosophy, and grew up into a dangerous antagonist of Christianity. It aspired to be a religion as well as a philosophy, and gradually incorporated more and more of such religious elements from the creeds of the Oriental philosophers as would harmonise with its system. It was extravagant, but it was earnest; wild, but serious. It created a kind of literature of its own. The Life of Apollonius of Tyana was a grave romance, in which it embodied much of its Theurgy, its power of connecting the invisible with the visible world; its wonder-working, through the intermediate dæmons at its command, which bears possibly, but not clearly, an intentional, certainly a close, resemblance to the Gospels. It seized and moulded to its purpose the poetry and philosophy of older Greece. Such of the mythic legends as it could allegorise, it retained with every demonstration of reverence; the rest it either allowed quietly to fall into oblivion, or repudiated as lawless fictions of the poets. The manner in which poetry was transmuted into moral and religious allegory is shown in the treatise of Porphyrius on the cave of the nymphs in the Odyssey. The skill, as well as the dreamy mysticism, with which this school of writers combined the dim traditions of the older philosophy and the esoteric doctrines of the mysteries, to give the sanction of antiquity to their own vague but attractive and fanciful theories, appears in the Life of Pythagoras, and in the work on the Mysteries, by a somewhat later writer, Iamblichus.

Porphy-  
rius,

Life of Py-  
thagoras.

Philoso-  
phic Pa-  
ganism  
not popu-  
lar.

After all, however, this philosophic Paganism could exercise no very extensive influence. Its votaries were probably far inferior in

(1) Origen contra Celsum, lib. vii.

(2) Tschirner, p. 401.



number to any one of those foreign religions introduced into the Greek and Roman part of the empire; and its strength perhaps consisted in the facility with which it coalesced with any one of those religions, or blended them up together in one somewhat discordant syncretism. The same man was philosopher, Hierophant at Samothrace or Eleusis, and initiate in the rites of Cybele, of Serapis, or of Mithra. Of itself this scheme was far too abstract and metaphysical to extend beyond the schools of Alexandria or of Athens. Though it prevailed afterwards in influencing the Heathen fanaticism of Julian, it eventually retarded but little the extinction of Heathenism. It was merely a sort of refuge for the intellectual few—a self-complacent excuse, which enabled them to assert, as they supposed, their own mental superiority, while they were endeavouring maintain or to revive the vulgar superstition, which they themselves could not, but in secret, condemn. The more refined it became, the less was it suited for common use, and the less it harmonised with the ordinary Paganism. Thus that which, in one respect, elevated it into a dangerous rival of Christianity, at the same time deprived it of its power. It had borrowed much from Christianity, or, at least, had been tacitly modified by its influence; but it was the speculative rather than the practical part, that which constituted its sublimity rather than its popularity, in which it approximated to the Gospel. We shall encounter this new Paganism again before long, in its more perfect and developed form.

The peace which Christianity enjoyed under the virtuous Severus Maximin. was disturbed by the violent accession of a Thracian savage (1). A. D. 235. It was enough to have shared in the favour of Alexander to incur the brutal resentment of Maximin. The Christian bishops like all the other polite and virtuous courtiers of his peaceful predecessor, were exposed to the suspicions and the hatred of the rude and warlike Maximin. Christianity, however, suffered, though in a severer degree, the common lot of mankind.

The short reign of Gordian was uneventful in Christian history. Gordian. The Emperors, it has been justly observed, who were born in the A. D. 238 Asiatic provinces were, in general, the least unfriendly to Christianity. Their religion, whatever it might be, was less uncongenial to some of the forms of the new faith; it was a kind of Eclecticism of different Eastern religions, which, in general, was least inclined to intolerance: at any rate, it was uninfluenced by national pride, which was now become the main support of Roman Paganism. —244. Philip, the Arabian (2), is claimed by some of the earliest Christian writers as a convert to the Gospel. Philip. But the extraordinary splendour with which he celebrated the great religious rites of A. D. 244. Rome refutes at once this statement. Yet it might be fortunate that

(1) Euseb. Ecc. Hist. vi. 28.

(2) Euseb. vi. 34.

Secular  
games.  
A. D. 247.

a sovereign of his mild sentiments towards the new faith filled the throne at a period when the secular games, which commemorated the thousandth year of Rome, were celebrated with unexampled magnificence. The majesty, the eternity, of the empire were intimately connected with the due performance of these solemnities. To their intermission, after the reign of Dioclesian, the Pagan historian ascribes the decline of Roman greatness. The second millennium of Rome commenced with no flattering signs; the times were gloomy and menacing; and the general and rigid absence of the Christians from these sacred national ceremonies, under a sterner or more bigoted emperor, would scarcely have escaped the severest animadversions of the government. Even under the present circumstances, the danger of popular tumult would be with difficulty avoided or restrained. Did patriotism and national pride incline the Roman Christians to make some sacrifice of their severer principles; to compromise for a time their rigid aversion to idolatry, which was thus connected with the peace and prosperity of the state?

Decius.  
A. D. 249  
—251.

The persecution under Decius, both in extent and violence, is the most uncontested of those which the ecclesiastical historians took pains to raise to the mystic number of the ten plagues of Egypt. It was almost the first measure of a reign which commenced in successful rebellion, and ended, after two years, in fatal defeat. The Goths delivered the Christians from their most formidable oppressor; yet the Goths may have been the innocent authors of their calamities. The passions and the policy of the Emperor were concurrent motives for his hostility. The Christians were now a recognised body in the state; however carefully they might avoid mingling in the political factions of the empire, they were necessarily of the party of the Emperor, whose favour they had enjoyed. His enemies became their enemies. Maximin persecuted those who had appeared at the court of Alexander Severus; Decius hated the adherents, as he supposed, the partisans, of the murdered Philip (1). The Gothic war shook to the centre the edifice of Roman greatness. Roman Paganism discovered in the relaxed morals of the people one of the causes of the decline of the empire; it demanded the revival of the censorship. This indiscriminating feeling would mistake, in the blindness of aversion and jealousy, the great silent corrective of the popular morality, for one of the principal causes of depravation. The partial protection of a foreign religion by a foreign Emperor (now that Christianity had begun to erect temple against temple, altar against altar, and the Christian bishop met the pontiff on equal terms around the imperial throne), would be considered among the flagrant departures from the sound wisdom of ancient

Causes of  
the Decian  
persecu-  
tion.

(1) Euseb. vi. 39

Rome. The descendant of the Decii, however his obscure Pannonian birth might cast a doubt on his hereditary dignity, was called upon to restore the religion as well as the manners of Rome to their ancient austere purity; to vindicate its insulted supremacy from the rivalry of an Asiatic and modern superstition. The persecution of Decius endeavoured to purify Rome itself from the presence of these degenerate enemies to her prosperity. The bishop Fabianus was one of the first victims of his resentment; and the Christians did not venture to raise a successor to the obnoxious office during the brief reign of Decius. The example of the capital was followed in many of the great cities of the empire. In the turbulent and sanguinary Alexandria, the zeal of the populace outran that of the Emperor, and had already commenced a violent local persecution (1). Antioch lamented the loss of her bishop, Babylas, whose relics were afterwards worshipped in what was still the voluptuous grove of Daphne. Origen was exposed to cruel torments, but escaped with his life. But Christian enthusiasm, by being disseminated over a wider sphere, had naturally lost some of its first vigour. With many, it was now an hereditary faith, not embraced by the ardent conviction of the individual, but instilled into the mind, with more or less depth, by Christian education. The Christian writers now begin to deplore the failure of genuine Christian principles, and to trace the divine wrath in the affliction of the churches. Instead of presenting, as it were, a narrow, but firm and unbroken, front to the enemy, a much more numerous, but less united and less uniformly resolute, force now marched under the banner of Christianity. Instead of the serene fortitude with which they formerly appeared before the tribunal of the magistrate, many now stood pale, trembling, and reluctant, neither ready to submit to the idolatrous ceremony of sacrifice, nor prepared to resist even unto death. The fiery zeal of the African churches appears to have been most subject to these paroxysms of weakness (2); it was there that the fallen, the Lapsi, formed a distinct and too numerous class, whose readmission into the privileges of the faithful became a subject of fierce controversy (3); and the Libellatici, who had purchased a billet of immunity from the rapacious government, formed another party, and were held in no less disrepute by those who, in the older spirit of the faith, had been ready or eager to obtain the crown of martyrdom.

Fabianus,  
Bishop of  
Rome.

Enthusi-  
asm of  
Christian-  
ity less  
strong.

Carthage was disgraced by the criminal weakness even of some among her clergy. A council was held to decide this difficult point; and the decisions of the council were tempered by moderation and

(1) Euseb. vi. 40, 41.

(2) Dionysius apud Eusebium, vi. 41.

(3) The severer opinion was called the heresy of Novatian; charity and orthodoxy, on this oc-

casión, concurred. Euseb. vi. sub fin., vii. 4, 5. Another controversy arose on the rebaptizing heretics, in which Cyprian took the lead of the severer party. Euseb. vii. 3.



humanity. None were perpetually and for ever excluded from the pale of salvation; but they were absolved, according to the degree of criminality which might attach to their apostacy. Those who sacrificed, the most awful and scarcely expiable offence, required long years of penitence and humility; those who had only weakly compromised their faith, by obtaining or purchasing billets of exemption from persecution, were admitted to shorter and easier terms of reconciliation (1).

Valerian.  
A. D. 254.

Valerian, who ascended the throne three years after the death of Decius, had been chosen by Decius to revive, in his person, the ancient and honourable office of censor; and the general admiration of his virtues had ratified the appointment of the Emperor. It was no discredit to Christianity that the commencement of the censor's reign, who may be supposed to have examined with more than ordinary care its influence on the public morals, was favourable to their cause. Their security was restored; and, for a short time, persecution ceased. The change which took place in the sentiments and conduct of Valerian is attributed to the influence of a man deeply versed in magical arts (2). The censor was enslaved by a superstition which the older Romans would have beheld with little less abhorrence than Christianity itself. It must be admitted, that Christian superstition was too much inclined to encroach upon the province of Oriental magic; and the more the older Polytheism decayed, the more closely it allied itself with this powerful agent in commanding the fears of man. The adepts in those dark and forbidden sciences were probably more influential opponents of Christianity with all classes, from the Emperor, who employed their mystic arts to inquire into the secrets of futurity, to the peasant, who shuddered at their power, than the ancient and established priesthood.

A. D. 257.

Macrianus is reported to have obtained such complete mastery over the mind of Valerian, as to induce him to engage in the most guilty mysteries of magic, to trace the fate of the empire in the entrails of human victims. The edict against the Christians, sugges-

(1) The horror with which those who had sacrificed were beheld by the more rigorous of their brethren may be conceived from the energetic language of Cyprian:—*Nonne quando ad Capitolium sponte ventum est, quando ultro ad obsequium diri facinoris accessum est, labavit gressus, caligavit aspectus, tremuerunt viscera, brachia coniderant? Nonne sensus obstupuit, lingua hesit, sermo deficit?... Nonne ara illa, quo moriturus accessit, rogos illi fuit? Nonne diaboli altare quod fetore tetro fumare et redolere conspexerat, velut funus et bustum vite sue horrere, ac fugere debebat... Ipse ad aram hostia, victima ipse venisti. Immolasti illic salutem tuam, spem tuam, fidem tuam, funestis illis ignibus concremasti. Cyprian, de Lapsis. Some died of remorse; with some the guilty food acted as poison. But the following was the most extra-*

ordinary occurrence of which Cyprian declares himself to have been an eyewitness. An infant had been abandoned by its parents in their flight. The nurse carried it to the magistrate. Being too young to eat meat, bread, steeped in wine offered in sacrifice, was forced into its mouth. Immediately that it returned to the Christians, the child, which could not speak, communicated the sense of its guilt by cries and convulsive agitations. It refused the sacrament (then administered to infants), closed its lips, and averted its face. The deacon forced it into its mouth. The consecrated wine would not remain in the contaminated body, but was cast up again.—In what a high-wrought state of enthusiasm must men have been who would relate and believe such statements as miraculous?

(2) Euseb. vii. 10.

ted by the animosity of Macrianus, allowed the community to remain in undisturbed impunity; but subjected all the bishops who refused to conform, to the penalty of death; and seized all the endowments of their churches into the public treasury.

The dignity of one of its victims conferred a melancholy celebrity on the persecution of Valerian. The most distinguished prelate at this time in Western Christendom was Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. If not of honourable birth or descent, for this appears doubtful, his talents had raised him to eminence and wealth. He taught rhetoric at Carthage, and, either by this honourable occupation, or by some other means, had acquired an ample fortune. Cyprian was advanced in life when he embraced the doctrines of Christianity; but he entered on his new career, if with the mature reason of age, with the ardour and freshness of youth. His wealth was devoted to pious and charitable uses; his rhetorical studies, if they gave clearness and order to his language, by no means chilled its fervour or constrained its vehemence. He had the African temperament of character, and, if it may be so said, of style; the warmth, the power of communicating its impassioned sentiments to the reader; perhaps not all the pregnant conciseness, nor all the energy, of Tertullian, but, at the same time, little of his rudeness and obscurity. Cyprian passed rapidly through the steps of Christian initiation, almost as rapidly through the first gradations of the clerical order. On the vacancy of the bishopric of Carthage, his reluctant diffidence was overpowered by the acclamations of the whole city, who environed his house, and compelled him by their friendly violence to assume the distinguished and, it might be, dangerous office. He yielded, to preserve the peace of the city (1).

Cyprian,  
Bishop of  
Carthage.

Cyprian entertained the loftiest notions of the episcopal authority. The severe and inviolable unity of the outward and visible Church appeared to him an integral part of Christianity; and the rigid discipline enforced by the episcopal order the only means of maintaining that unity. The pale which enclosed the church from the rest of mankind was drawn with the most relentless precision. It was the ark, and all without it were left to perish in the unsparing deluge (2). The growth of heretical discord or disobedience was inexpiable, even by the blood of the transgressor. He might bear the flames with equanimity; he might submit to be torn to pieces by wild beasts—there could be no martyr *without* the church. Tortures and death bestowed not the crown of immortality; they were but the just retribution of treason to the faith (3).

(1) Epist. xiv.

(2) Si potuit evadere quisquam, qui extra arcam Noë fuit, et qui extra ecclesiam foris fuerit, evadit. Cyprian, de Unitate Ecclesiæ.

(3) Esse martyr non potest, qui in ecclesiâ non est.

Ardeant licet flammis et ignibus traditi, vel objecti bestiis animas suas ponant, non erit illa fidei corona, sed pœna perfidiæ, nec religiosæ virtutis exitus gloriosus, sed desperationis interitus. De Unit. Eccles.

Et tamen neque hoc baptisma (sanguinis) hero-

The fearful times which arose during his episcopate tried these stern and lofty principles, as the questions which arose out of the Decian persecutions did his judgment and moderation. Cyprian, who embraced without hesitation the severer opinion with regard to the rebaptizing heretics, notwithstanding his awful horror of the guilt of apostacy, acquiesced in, if he did not dictate, the more temperate decisions of the Carthaginian synod concerning those whose weakness had betrayed them either into the public denial, or a timid dissimulation, of the faith.

The first rumour of persecution designated the Bishop of Carthage for its victim. "Cyprian to the lions!" was the loud and unanimous outcry of infuriated Paganism. Cyprian withdrew from the storm, not, as his subsequent courageous behaviour showed, from timidity; but neither approving that useless and sometimes ostentatious prodigality of life, which betrayed more pride than humble acquiescence in the divine will; possibly from the truly charitable reluctance to tempt his enemies to an irretrievable crime. He withdrew to some quiet and secure retreat, from which he wrote animating and consolatory letters to those who had not been so prudent or so fortunate as to escape the persecution. His letters describe the relentless barbarity with which the Christians were treated; they are an authentic and cotemporary statement of the sufferings which the Christians endured in defence of their faith. If highly coloured by the generous and tender sympathies, or by the ardent eloquence of Cyprian, they have nothing of legendary extravagance. The utmost art was exercised to render bodily suffering more acute and more intense; it was a continued strife between the obstinacy and inventive cruelty of the tormentor, and the patience of the victim (1). During the reign of Decius, which appears to have been one continued persecution, Cyprian stood aloof in his undisturbed retreat. He returned to Carthage probably on the commencement of Valerian's reign, and had a splendid opportunity of Christian revenge upon the city which had thirsted for his blood. A plague ravaged the whole Roman world, and its most destructive violence thinned the streets of Carthage. It went spreading on from house to house, especially those of the lower orders, with awful regularity. The streets were strewn with the bodies of the dead and the dying, who vainly appealed to the laws of nature and humanity for that assistance of which those who passed them by, might soon stand in need. General distrust spread through society. Men avoided or

Plague in  
Carthage.

tico prodest, quamvis Christum confessus, et extra ecclesiam fuerit occisus. Epist. lxxiii.

"Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 3. — Is there no difference between the spirit of St. Paul and of Cyprian?

(1) Tolerastis usque ad consummationem gloriæ durissimam questionem, nec cessistis supplicis, sed vobis potius supplicia cesserunt.

Steterunt tuti tormentibus fortiores, et pulsantes et laniantes ungulas pulsata ac laniata membra vicerunt. Inexpugnabilem fidem superare non potuit sæviens diu plaga repetita quamvis rupta compage viscerum; torquerentur in servis Dei jam non membra, sed vulnera. Cyprian, Epist. viii. ad Martyres. Compare Epist. lxii.



exposed their nearest relatives; as if, by excluding the dying, they could exclude death (1). No one, says the deacon Pontius, writing of the population of Carthage in general, did as he would be done by. Cyprian addressed the Christians in the most earnest and effective language. He exhorted them to show the sincerity of their belief in the doctrines of their master, not by confining their acts or kindness to their own brotherhood, but by extending them indiscriminately to their enemies. The city was divided into districts; offices were assigned to all the Christians; the rich lavished their wealth, the poor their personal exertions; and men, perhaps just emerged from the mine or the prison, with the scars or the mutilations of their recent tortures upon their bodies, were seen exposing their lives, if possible, to a more honourable martyrdom; as before the voluntary victims of Christian faith, so now of Christian charity. Yet the Heathen party, instead of being subdued, persisted in attributing this terrible scourge to the impiety of the Christians, which provoked the angry gods; nor can we wonder if the zeal of Cyprian retorted the argument, and traced rather the retributive justice of the Almighty for the wanton persecutions inflicted on the unoffending Christians.

A. D. 252.  
Conduct  
of Cyprian  
and the  
Chris-  
tians.

Cyprian did not again withdraw on the commencement of the Valerian persecution. He was summoned before the proconsul, who communicated his instructions from the Emperor, to compel all those who professed foreign religions to offer sacrifice. Cyprian refused, with tranquil determination. He was banished from Carthage. He remained in his pleasant retreat, rather than place of exile, in the small town of Ceribis, near the sea-shore, in a spot shaded with verdant groves, and with a clear and healthful stream of water. It was provided with every comfort and even luxury, in which the austere nature of Cyprian would permit itself to indulge (2). But when his hour came, the tranquil and collected dignity of Cyprian in no respect fell below his lofty principles.

Cyprian's  
retreat.

On the accession of a new proconsul, Galerius Maximus, Cyprian was either recalled or permitted to return from his exile. He resided in his own gardens, from whence he received a summons to appear before the proconsul. He would not listen to the earnest solicitations of his friends, who entreated him again to consult his safety by withdrawing to some place of concealment. His trial was postponed for a day; he was treated, while in custody, with respect and even delicacy. But the intelligence of the apprehension of Cyprian drew together the whole city; the Heathen, eager to behold the spectacle of his martyrdom; the Christians, to watch in their affec-

Return to  
Carthage.

1) Pontius, in *Vita Cypriani*. *Horre omnes, fugere, vitare contagium; exponere suos impie; quasi cum illo peste morituro, etiam mortem ipsam aliquis posset excludere.*

(2) "If," says Pontius, who visited his master

in his retirement, "instead of this sunny and agreeable spot, it had been a waste and rocky solitude, the angels which fed Elijah and Daniel would have ministered to the holy Cyprian."

tionate zeal at the doors of his prison. In the morning, he had to walk some distance, and was violently heated by the exertion. A Christian soldier offered to procure him dry linen, apparently from mere courtesy, but, in reality, to obtain such precious relics, steeped in the "bloody sweat" of the martyr. Cyprian intimated that it was useless to seek remedy for inconveniences which, perhaps, that day would pass away for ever. After a short delay, the proconsul appeared. The examination was brief:—"Art thou Thascius Cyprian, the bishop of so many impious men? The most sacred Emperor commands thee to sacrifice." Cyprian answered, "I will not sacrifice." "Consider well," rejoined the proconsul. "Execute your orders," answered Cyprian; "the case admits of no consideration."

Galerius consulted with his council, and then reluctantly (1) delivered his sentence. "Thascius Cyprian, thou hast lived long in thy impiety, and assembled around thee many men involved in the same wicked conspiracy. Thou hast shown thyself an enemy alike to the gods and the laws of the empire; the pious and sacred Emperors have in vain endeavoured to recal thee to the worship of thy ancestors. Since then thou hast been the chief author and leader of these most guilty practices, thou shalt be an example to those whom thou hast deluded to thy unlawful assemblies. Thou must expiate thy crime with thy blood." Cyprian said, "God be thanked (2)." The Bishop of Carthage was carried into a neighbouring field and beheaded. He maintained his serene composure to the last. It was remarkable that but a few days afterwards the proconsul died. Though he had been in bad health, this circumstance was not likely to be lost upon the Christians.

Miserable  
death of  
the perse-  
cutors of  
Christi-  
anity.

Every where, indeed, the public mind was no doubt strongly impressed with the remarkable fact, which the Christians would lose no opportunity of enforcing on the awe-struck attention, that their enemies appeared to be the enemies of Heaven. An early and a fearful fate appeared to be the inevitable lot of the persecutors of Christianity. Their profound and earnest conviction that the hand of Divine Providence was perpetually and visibly interposing in the affairs of men would not be so deeply imbued with the spirit of their Divine Master, as to suppress the language of triumph, or even of vengeance, when the enemies of their God and of themselves either suffered defeat and death, or, worse than an honourable death, a cruel and insulting captivity. The death of Decius, according to the Pagan account, was worthy of the old republic. He was environed by the Goths; his son was killed by an arrow; he

(1) In the *Acta*, *vix ægrè* is the expression; it may however mean that he spoke with difficulty, on account of his bad health.

(2) I have translated this sentence, as the *Acts* of Cyprian are remarkable for their simplicity, and total absence of later legendary ornament;

and particularly for the circumstantial air of truth with which they do justice to the regularity of the whole proceeding. Compare the *Life* of Cyprian by the Deacon Pontius; the *Acts*, in Ruinart, p. 216; *Cave's Lives of the Apostles*, etc., art. Cyprian.

cried aloud, that the loss of a single soldier was nothing to the glory of the empire; he renewed the battle, and fell valiantly. The Christian writers strip away all the more ennobling incidents. According to their account, having been decoyed by the enemy, or misled by a treacherous friend, into a marsh where he could neither fight nor fly, he perished tamely, and his unburied body was left to the beasts and carrion fowls (1). The captivity of Valerian, the mystery which hung over his death, allowed ample scope to the imagination of those whose national hatred of the barbarians would attribute the most unmanly ferocity to the Persian conqueror, and of those who would consider their God exalted by the most cruel and debasing sufferings inflicted on the oppressor of the church. Valerian, it was said, was forced to bend his back that the proud conqueror might mount his horse, as from a footstool; his skin was flayed off, according to one more modern account, while he was alive, stuffed, and exposed to the mockery of the Persian rabble.

The luxurious and versatile Gallienus restored peace to the church. The edict of Valerian was rescinded; the bishops resumed their public functions; the buildings were restored, and their property, which had been confiscated by the state, restored to the rightful owners (2).

The last transient collision of Christianity with the government before its final conflict under Dioclesian, took place, or was at least threatened, during the administration of the great Aurelian. the reign of Aurelian, occupied by warlike campaigns in every part of the world, left little time for attention to the internal police, or the religious interests, of the empire. The mother of Aurelian was priestess of the sun at Sirmium, and the Emperor built a temple to that deity, his tutelary god, at Rome. But the dangerous wars of Aurelian required the concurrent aid of all the deities who took an interest in the fate of Rome. The sacred ceremony of consulting the Sibylline books, in whose secret and mysterious leaves were written the destinies of Rome, took place at his command. The severe Emperor reproaches the senate for their want of faith in these mystic volumes, or of zeal in the public service, as though they had been infected by the principles of Christianity.

But no hostile measures were taken against Christianity in the early part of his reign; and he was summoned to take upon himself the extraordinary office of arbiter in a Christian controversy. A new empire seemed rising in the East, under the warlike Queen of Palmyra. Zenobia extended her protection, with politic indifference, to Jew, to Pagan, and to Christian. It might almost appear that a kindred spiritual ambition animated her favourite, Paul of

Gallienus  
alone.  
A. D. 260.

Aurelian.  
A. D. 271  
—275.

(1) Orat. Constant. apud Euseb. c. xxiv. Lac-  
tant. de Mort. Persec.

(2) Euseb. vii. 13; x. 23.



Paul of  
Samosata.

Samosata, the Bishop of Antioch, and that he aspired to found a new religion, adapted to the kingdom of Palmyra, by blending together the elements of Paganism, of Judaism, and of Christianity. Ambitious, dissolute, and rapacious, according to the representation of his adversaries, Paul of Samosata had been advanced to the important see of Antioch; but the zealous vigilance of the neighbouring bishops soon discovered that Paul held opinions, as to the mere human nature of the Saviour, more nearly allied to Judaism than to the Christian creed. The pride, the wealth, the state of Paul, no less offended the feelings, and put to shame the more modest demeanour and humbler pretensions of former prelates. He had obtained, either from the Roman authorities or from Zenobia, a civil magistracy, and prided himself more on his title of duenary than of Christian bishop. He passed through the streets environed by guards, and preceded and followed by multitudes of attendants and supplicants, whose petitions he received and read with the stately bearing of a public officer rather than the affability of a prelate. His conduct in the ecclesiastical assemblies was equally overbearing: he sat on a throne, and while he indulged himself in every kind of theatric gesture, resented the silence of those who did not receive him with applause, or pay homage to his dignity. His magnificence disturbed the modest solemnity of the ordinary worship. Instead of the simpler music of the church, the hymns, in which the voices of the worshippers mingled in fervent, if less harmonious, unison, Paul organised a regular choir, in which the soft tones of female voices, in their more melting and artificial cadences, sometimes called to mind the voluptuous rites of Paganism, and could not be heard without shuddering by those accustomed to the more unadorned ritual (1). The Hosannas, sometimes introduced as a kind of salutation to the bishop, became, it was said, the chief part of the service, which was rather to the glory of Paul than of the Lord. This introduction of a new and effeminate ceremonial would of itself, with its rigid adversaries, have formed a ground for the charge of dissolute morals, against which may be fairly urged the avowed patronage of the severe Zenobia (2). But the pomp of Paul's expenditure did not interfere with the accumulation of considerable wealth, which he extorted from the timid zeal of his partisans; and, it was said, by the venal administration of the judicial authority of his episcopate, perhaps of his civil magistracy. But Paul by no means stood alone; he had a powerful party among the ecclesiastical body, the chorepiscopi of the country districts, and the presbyters of the city. He set at defiance the synod of bishops, who pronounced a solemn sentence of excommunication (3);

(1) Ὡς καὶ ἀκουσας ἂν τις φησίζεν.  
Such is the expression in the decree of excommunication issued by the bishops. Euseb. vii. 30.

(2) Compare Routh, Reliq. Sacr. ii. 505.

(3) See the sentence in Eusebius, vii. 30., and in Routh, Reliquæ Sacræ, ii. 465., et seq.

and secure under the protection of the Queen of Palmyra, if her ambition should succeed in wresting Syria, with its noble capital, from the power of Rome, and in maintaining her strong and influential position between the conflicting powers of Persia and the Empire, Paul might hope to share in her triumph, and establish his degenerate but splendid form of Christianity in the very seat of its primitive Apostolic foundation. Paul had staked his success upon that of his warlike patroness; and on the fall of Zenobia, the bishops appealed to Aurelian to expel the rebel against their authority, and the partisan of the Palmyrenes, who had taken arms against the majesty of the empire, from his episcopal dignity at Antioch. Aurelian did not altogether refuse to interfere in this unprecedented cause, but, with laudable impartiality, declined any actual cognisance of the affair, and transferred the sentence from the personal enemies of Paul, the Bishops of Syria, to those of Rome and Italy. By their sentence, Paul was degraded from his episcopate.

The sentiments of Aurelian changed towards Christianity near the close of his reign. The severity of his character, reckless of human blood, would not, if committed in the strife, have hesitated at any measures to subdue the rebellious spirit of his subjects. Sanguinary edicts were issued, though his death prevented their general promulgation; and in the fate of Aurelian the Christians discovered another instance of the Divine vengeance, which appeared to mark their enemies with the sign of inevitable and appalling destruction.

Till the reign of Dioclesian, the churches reposed in undisturbed but enervating security.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PERSECUTION UNDER DIOCLESIAN.

THE final contest between Paganism and Christianity drew near. Almost three hundred years had elapsed since the divine Author of the new religion had entered upon his mortal life in a small village in Palestine (1); and now, having gained so powerful an ascendancy over the civilised world, the Gospel was to undergo its last and most trying ordeal, before it should assume the reins of empire, and become the established religion of the Roman world. It was to sustain the deliberate and systematic attack of the temporal authority, arming, in almost every part of the empire, in defence of the ancient Polytheism. At this crisis, it is important to survey the

(1) Dioclesian began his reign A. D. 284. The commencement of the persecution is dated A. D. 303.

Peace of  
the Chris-  
tians.

state of Christianity, as well as the character of the sovereign, and of the government, which made this ultimate and most vigorous attempt to suppress the triumphant progress of the new faith. The last fifty years, with a short interval of menaced, probably of actual, persecution, during the reign of Aurelian, had passed in peace and security. The Christians had become not merely a public, but an imposing and influential, body ; their separate existence had been recognised by the law of Gallienus ; their churches had arisen in most of the cities of the empire ; as yet, probably, with no great pretensions to architectural grandeur, though no doubt ornamented by the liberality of the worshippers, and furnished with vestments and chalices, lamps, and chandeliers of silver. The number of these buildings was constantly on the increase, or the crowding multitudes of proselytes demanded the extension of the narrow and humble walls. The Christians no longer declined, or refused to aspire to the honours of the state. They filled offices of distinction, and even of supreme authority, in the provinces, and in the army ; they were exempted either by tacit connivance, or direct indulgence, from the accustomed sacrifices. Among the more immediate attendants on the Emperor, two or three openly professed the Christian faith ; Prisca the wife, and Valeria, the daughter of Dioclesian, and the wife of Galerius, were suspected, if not avowed, partakers in the Christian mysteries (1). If it be impossible to form the most remote approximation to their relative numbers with that of the Pagan population ; it is equally erroneous to estimate their strength and influence by numerical calculation. All political changes are wrought by a compact, organised, and disciplined minority. The mass of mankind are shown by experience, and appear fated, by the constitution of our nature, to follow any vigorous impulse from a determined and incessantly aggressive few.

Progress  
of Chris-  
tianity.

Relaxation  
of Chris-  
tian  
morals.

Of Chris-  
tian cha-  
rity.

The long period of prosperity had produced in the Christian community its usual consequences, some relaxation of morals : but Christian charity had probably suffered more than Christian purity. The more flourishing and extensive the community, the more the pride, perhaps the temporal advantages of superiority, predominated over the Christian motives, which led men to aspire to the supreme functions in the church. Sacerdotal domination began to exercise its awful powers, and the bishop to assume the language and the authority of the vicegerent of God. Feuds distracted the bosom of the peaceful communities, and disputes sometimes proceeded to open violence. Such is the melancholy confession of the Christians themselves, who, according to the spirit of the times, considered the dangers and the afflictions to which they were exposed in the light of divine judgments ; and deplored, perhaps with

(1) Euseb, Eccl. Hist. viii. 1.



something of the exaggeration of religious humiliation, the visible decay of holiness and peace (1). But it is the strongest proof of the firm hold of a party, whether religious or political, upon the public mind, when it may offend with impunity against its own primary principles. That which at one time is a sign of incurable weakness, or approaching dissolution, at another seems but the excess of healthful energy and the evidence of unbroken vigour.

The acts of Dioclesian are the only trustworthy history of his character. The son of a slave, or, at all events, born of obscure and doubtful parentage, who could force his way to sovereign power, conceive and accomplish the design of reconstructing the whole empire, must have been a man, at least, of strong political courage, of profound, if not always wise, and statesmanlike views. In the person of Dioclesian, the Emperor of Rome became an Oriental monarch. The old republican forms were disdainfully cast aside; consuls and tribunes gave way to new officers, with adulatory and un-Roman appellations. Dioclesian himself assumed the new title of *Dominus* or Lord, which gave offence even to the servile and flexible religion of his Pagan subjects, who reluctantly, at first, paid the homage of adoration to the master of the world.

Diocle-  
sian.

Nor was the ambition of Dioclesian of a narrow or personal character. With the pomp, he did not affect the solitude, of an Eastern despot. The necessity of the state appeared to demand the active and perpetual presence of more than one person invested in sovereign authority, who might organise the decaying forces of the different divisions of the empire, against the menacing hosts of barbarians on every frontier. Two *Augusti* and two *Cæsars* shared the dignity and the cares of the public administration (2)—a measure, if expedient for the security, fatal to the prosperity, of the exhausted provinces, which found themselves burdened with the maintenance of four imperial establishments. A new system of taxation was imperatively demanded, and relentlessly introduced (3), while the Emperor seemed to mock the bitter and ill-suppressed murmurs of the provinces, by his lavish expenditure in magnificent and ornamental buildings. That was attributed to the avarice of Dioclesian, which arose out of the change in the form of government, and in some degree out of his sumptuous taste in that particular department, the embellishment, not of Rome only, but of the chief cities of the Empire—Milan, Carthage, and Nicomedia. At one time, the all-pervading government aspired, after a season of scarcity, to regulate the prices of all commodities, and of all interchange, whether of labour or of bargain and sale, between man and man. This sin-

Change in  
the state  
of the em-  
pire.

(1) Euseb. *Ecl. Hist.* viii. 1.

(2) In the *Leben Constantins des Grossen*, by Manso, there is a good discussion on the authority and relative position of the *Augusti* and the *Cæsars*.

(3) The extension of the rights of citizenship to the whole empire by Caracalla made it impossible to maintain the exemptions and immunities which that privilege had thus lavishly conferred.

gular and gigantic effort of well-meant, but mistaken despotism, has come to light in the present day (1).

Neglect of  
Rome.

Among the innovations introduced by Dioclesian, none, perhaps, was more closely connected with the interests of Christianity than the virtual degradation of Rome from the capital of the empire, by the constant residence of the Emperor in other cities. Though the old metropolis was not altogether neglected in the lavish expenditure of the public wealth upon new edifices, either for the convenience of the people or the splendour of public solemnities, yet a larger share fell to the lot of other towns, particularly of Nicomedia (2). In this city, the emperor more frequently displayed the new state of his imperial court, while Rome was rarely honoured by his presence; nor was his retreat, when wearied with political strife, on the Campanian coast, in the Bay of Baiæ, which the older Romans had girt with their splendid seats of retirement and luxury; it was on the Illyrian and barbarous side of the Adriatic that the palace of Dioclesian arose, and his agricultural establishment spread its narrow belt of fertility. The removal of the seat of government more clearly discovered the magnitude of the danger to the existing institutions from the progress of Christianity. The East was, no doubt, more fully peopled with Christians than any part of the Western world, unless, perhaps, the province of Africa; at all events, their relative rank, wealth, and importance, much more nearly balanced that of the adherents of the old Polytheism (3). In Rome, the ancient majesty of the national religion must still have kept down in comparative obscurity the aspiring rivalry of Christianity. The Prætor still made way for the pontifical order, and submitted his fasces to the vestal virgin, while the Christian bishop pursued his humble and unmarked way. The modest church or churches of the Christians lay hid, no doubt in some sequestered street, or in the obscure Transeverine region, and did not venture to contrast themselves with the stately temples on which the ruling people of the world, and the sovereigns of mankind, had for ages lavished their treasures. However the church of the metropolis of the world might maintain a high rank in Christian estimation, might boast its antiquity, its Apostolic origin, at least of being the scene of Apostolic martyrdom, and might number many distinguished proselytes in all ranks, even

(1) Edict of Dioclesian, published and illustrated by Col. Leake. It is alluded to in the *Treatise de Mortibus, Persecut.* c. vii.

(2) *Ita semper dementabat, Nicodemiam studentis urbi Romæ cœquare. De Mort. Persecut.* c. 7.

(3) Tertullian, *Apolog.* c. 37. Mr. Coneybeare (*Bampton Lectures*, page 345.) has drawn a curious inference from a passage in this chapter of Tertullian, that the majority of those who had a right of citizenship in those cities had embraced the Christian faith, while the mobs were its most furious opponents. It appears unquestionable that the strength of Christianity lay in the mid-

dle, perhaps the mercantile, classes. The two last books of the *Paidagogos* of Clement of Alexandria, the most copious authority for Christian manners at that time, inveighs against the vices of an opulent and luxurious community, splendid dresses, jewels, gold and silver vessels, rich banquets, gilded litters and chariots, and private baths. The ladies kept Indian birds, Median peacocks, monkeys, and Maltese dogs, instead of maintaining widows and orphans; the men had multitudes of slaves. The sixth chapter of the third book—"that the Christian alone is rich," would have been unmeaning if addressed to a poor community.

in the imperial court; still Paganism, in this stronghold of its most gorgeous pomp, its hereditary sanctity, its intimate connection with all the institutions, and its incorporation with the whole ceremonial of public affairs; in Rome, must have maintained at least its outward supremacy (1). But, in comparison with the less imposing dignity of the municipal government, or the local priesthood, the Bishop of Antioch or Nicomedia was a far greater person than the predecessor of the popes among the consulars and the senate, the hereditary aristocracy of the old Roman families, or the ministers of the ruling Emperor. In Nicomedia, the Christian church, an edifice at least of considerable strength and solidity, stood on an eminence commanding the town, and conspicuous above the palace of the sovereign.

Dioclesian might seem born to accomplish that revolution which took place so soon after, under the reign of Constantine. The new constitution of the empire might appear to require a reconstruction of the religious system. The Emperor, who had not scrupled to accommodate the form of the government, without respect to the ancient majesty of Rome, to the present position of affairs; to degrade the capital itself into the rank of a provincial city; and to prepare the way, at least, for the removal of the seat of government to the East, would have been withheld by no scruples of veneration for ancient rites, or ancestral ceremonies, if the establishment of a new religion had appeared to harmonise with his general policy. But his mind was not yet ripe for such a change; nor perhaps his knowledge of Christianity, and its profound and unseen influence, sufficiently extensive. In his assumption of the title Jovius, while his colleague took that of Herculus, Dioclesian gave a public pledge of his attachment to the old Polytheism. Among the cares of his administration, he by no means neglected the purification of the ancient religions (2). In Paganism itself, that silent but manifest change, of which we have already noticed the commencement, had been creeping on. The new philosophic Polytheism which Julian attempted to establish on the ruins of Christianity was still endeavouring to supersede the older poetic faith of the Heathen nations. It had not even yet come to sufficient maturity to offer itself as a formidable antagonist of the religion of Christ. This new Paganism, as we have observed, arose out of the alliance of the philosophy and the religion of the old world. These once implacable

Religion  
of Diocle-  
sian.

New Paga-  
nism.

(1) In a letter of Cornelius, bishop of Rome, written during or soon after the reign of Licinius, the ministerial establishment in the church of Rome is thus stated:—One bishop; forty-six presbyters; seven deacons; seven subdeacons; forty-two acolyths or attendants; fifty-two exorcists, readers, and doorkeepers; fifteen hundred widows and poor. Euseb. vi. 43.

Optatus, lib. ii., states that there were more than forty churches in Rome at the time of the

persecution of Dioclesian. It has been usual to calculate one church for each presbyter; which would suppose a falling off, at least no increase, during the interval. But some of the presbyters reckoned by Cornelius may have been superannuated, or in prison, and their place supplied by others.

(2) *Veterrimæ religiones castissimè curatæ.* Aurel. Vict. de Cæsar.



Worship  
of the sun.

adversaries had reconciled their difference, and coalesced against the common enemy. Christianity itself had no slight influence upon the formation of the new system; and now an Eastern element, more and more strongly dominant, mingled with the whole, and lent it, as it were, a visible object of worship. From Christianity, the new Paganism had adopted the unity of the Deity; and scrupled not to degrade all the gods of the older world into subordinate dæmons or ministers. The Christians had incautiously held the same language: both concurred in the name of dæmons; but the Pagans used the phrase in the Platonic sense, as good, but subordinate, spirits; while the same term spoke to the Christian ear as expressive of malignant and diabolic agency. But the Jupiter Optimus Maximus was not the great supreme of the new system. The universal deity of the East, the Sun, to the philosophic was the emblem or representative, to the vulgar, the Deity. Dioclesian himself, though he paid so much deference to the older faith as to assume the title of Jovius, as belonging to the Lord of the world, yet, on his accession, when he would exculpate himself from all concern in the murder of his predecessor Numerian, he appealed in the face of the army to the all-seeing deity of the sun. It is the oracle of Apollo of Miletus, consulted by the hesitating Emperor, which is to decide the fate of Christianity. The metaphorical language of Christianity had unconsciously lent strength to this new adversary; and, in adoring the visible orb, some, no doubt, supposed that they were not departing far from the worship of the "Sun of Righteousness (1)."

But though it might enter into the imagination of an imperious and powerful sovereign to fuse together all these conflicting faiths, the new Paganism was beginning to advance itself as the open and most dangerous adversary of the religion of Christ. Hierocles, the great Hierophant of the Platonic Paganism, is distinctly named as the author of the persecution under Dioclesian (2).

Thus, then, an irresistible combination of circumstances tended to precipitate the fatal crisis. The whole political scheme of Dioclesian was incomplete, unless some distinct and decided course was taken with these self-governed corporations, who rendered, according to the notions of the time, such imperfect allegiance to the sovereign power. But the cautious disposition of Dioclesian, his deeper insight, perhaps, into the real nature of the struggle which would take place; his advancing age, and, possibly, the latent and depressing influence of the malady which may then have been hanging over him, and which, a short time after, brought him to

(1) Hermogenes, one of the older heresiarchs, applied the text "he has placed his tabernacle in the sun," to Christ, and asserted that Christ had put off his body in the sun. Pantænus apud Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, i. 339.

(2) Another philosophic writer published a work against the Christians. See Fleury, p. 452., from Tertullian.

the brink of the grave (1); these concurrent motives would induce him to shrink from violent measures; to recommend a more temporising policy; and to consent, with difficult reluctance, to the final committal of the imperial authority in a contest in which the complete submission of the opposite party could only be expected by those who were altogether ignorant of its strength. The imperial power had much to lose in an unsuccessful contest; it was likely to gain, if successful, only a temporary and external conquest. On the one hand, it was urged by the danger of permitting a vast and self-governed body to coexist with the general institutions of the empire; on the other, if not a civil war, a contest which would array one part of almost every city of the empire against the other in domestic hostility, might appear even of more perilous consequence to the public welfare.

The party of the old religion, now strengthened by the accession of the philosophic faction, risked nothing, and might expect much, from the vigorous, systematic, and universal intervention of the civil authority. It was clear that nothing less would restore its superiority to the decaying cause of Polytheism. Nearly three centuries of tame and passive connivance, or of open toleration, had only increased the growing power of Christianity, while it had not in the least allayed that spirit of moral conquest which avowed that its ultimate end was the total extinction of idolatry.

Senti-  
ments of  
the philo-  
sophic  
party.

But in the army, the parties were placed in more inevitable opposition; and in the army commenced the first overt acts of hostility, which were the prognostics of the general persecution (2). No where did the old Roman religion retain so much hold upon the mind as among the sacred eagles. Without sacrifice to the givers of victory, the superstitious soldiery would advance, divested of their usual confidence, against the enemy; and defeat was ascribed to some impious omission in the ceremonial of propitiating the gods. The Christians now formed no unimportant part in the army: though permitted by the ruling authorities to abstain from idolatrous conformity, their contempt of the auspices which promised, and of the rites which insured, the divine favour, would be looked upon with equal awe and animosity. The unsuccessful general, and the routed army, would equally seize every excuse to cover the misconduct of the one, or the cowardice of the other. In the pride of victory, the present deities of Rome would share the honour with Roman valour: the assistance of the Christians would be forgotten in defeat; the resentment of the gods, to whom that

(1) The charge of derangement, which rests on the authority of Constantine, as related by Eusebius, is sufficiently confuted by the dignity of his abdication; the placid content with which he appeared to enjoy his peaceful retreat; the respect paid to him by his turbulent and am-

bitious colleagues; and the involuntary influence which he still appeared to exercise over the affairs of the empire.

(2) Ἐκ τῶν ἐν στρατείαις ἀδελφῶν καταρχομένου τοῦ διαγμου. Euseb. viii. 1. Compare ch. iv.

defeat would be attributed, would be ascribed to the impiety of their godless comrades. An incident of this kind took place, during one of his campaigns, in the presence of Dioclesian. The army was assembled around the altar; the sacrificing priest in vain sought for the accustomed signs in the entrails of the victim; the sacrifice was again and again repeated, but always with the same result. The baffled soothsayer, trembling with awe or with indignation, denounced the presence of profane strangers. The Christians had been seen, perhaps boasted, that they had made the sign of the cross, and put to flight the impotent dæmons of idolatrous worship. They were apprehended, and commanded to sacrifice; and a general edict issued that all who refused to pay honour to the martial deities of Rome should be expelled the army. It is far from improbable that frequent incidents of this nature may have occurred; if in the unsuccessful campaign of Galerius in the East, nothing was more likely to embitter the mind of that violent Emperor against the whole Christian community. Nor would this animosity be allayed by the success with which he retrieved his former failure. While the impiety of the Christians would be charged with all the odium of defeat, they would never be permitted to participate in the glories of victory.

Deliberations concerning Christianity.

During the winter of the year of Christ 302-3, the great question of the policy to be adopted towards the Christians was debated, first in a private conference between Dioclesian and Galerius. Dioclesian, though urged by his more vehement partner in the empire, was averse from sanguinary proceedings, from bloodshed and confusion; he was inclined to more temperate measures, which would degrade the Christians from every post of rank or authority, and expel them from the palace and the army. The palace itself was divided by conflicting factions. Some of the chief officers of Dioclesian's household openly professed Christianity; his wife and his daughter were at least favourably disposed to the same cause; while the mother of Galerius, a fanatical worshipper, probably of Cybele, was seized with a spirit of proselytism, and celebrated almost every day a splendid sacrifice, followed by a banquet, at which she required the presence of the whole court. The pertinacious resistance of the Christians provoked her implacable resentment; and her influence over her son was incessantly employed to inflame his mind to more active animosity. Dioclesian at length consented to summon a council, formed of some persons, versed in the administration of the law, and some military men. Of these, one party were already notoriously hostile to Christianity (1), the rest were courtiers, who bent to every intimation of the imperial favour. Dioclesian still prolonged his resistance (2), till, either to give greater solemnity to

Council.

(1) Hierocles, the philosopher, was probably a member of this council. Mosheim, p. 922.

(2) According to the unfriendly representation of the author of the *Treatise de Mort. Pers.*,



the decree, or to identify their measures more completely with the cause of Polytheism, it was determined to consult the oracle of Apollo at Miletus. The answer of the oracle might be anticipated ; and Dioclesian submitted to the irresistible united authority of his friends, of Galerius, and of the God, and contented himself with moderating the severity of the edict. Galerius proposed that all who refused to sacrifice should be burned alive : Dioclesian stipulated that there should be no loss of life. A fortunate day was chosen for the execution of the imperial decree. The feast of Terminalia was inseparably connected with the stability of the Roman power ; that power which was so manifestly endangered by the progress of Christianity. At the dawn of day, the Præfect of the city appeared at the door of the church in Nicomedia, attended by the officers of the city and of the court. The doors were instantly thrown down ; the Pagans beheld with astonishment the vacant space, and sought in vain for the statue of the deity. The sacred books were instantly burned, and the rest of the furniture of the building plundered by the tumultuous soldiery. The Emperors commanded from the palace a full view of the tumult and spoliation, for the church stood on a height at no great distance ; and Galerius wished to enjoy the spectacle of a conflagration of the building. The more prudent Dioclesian, fearing that the fire might spread to the splendid buildings which adjoined it, suggested a more tardy and less imposing plan of demolition. The pioneers of the Prætorian guard advanced with their tools, and in a few hours the whole building was razed to the ground.

Edict of  
persecu-  
tion.

Its public-  
ation.

Its execu-  
tion in Ni-  
comedia.

The Christians made no resistance, but awaited in silent consternation the promulgation of the fatal edict. On the next morning it appeared. It was framed in terms of the sternest and most rigorous proscription, short of the punishment of death. It comprehended all ranks and orders under its sweeping and inevitable provisions. Throughout the empire, the churches of the Christians were to be levelled with the earth ; the public existence of the religion was thus to be annihilated. The sacred books were to be delivered, under pain of death, by their legitimate guardians, the bishops and presbyters, to the imperial officers, and publicly burnt. The philosophic party thus hoped to extirpate those pernicious writings with which they in vain contested the supremacy of the public mind.

The property of the churches, whether endowments in land or furniture, was confiscated ; all public assemblies, for the purposes of worship, prohibited ; the Christians of rank and distinction were degraded from all their offices, and declared incapable of filling any situation of trust or authority ; those of the plebeian order were deprived of the right of Roman citizenship, which secured the sanc-

whose view of Dioclesian's character is confirmed by Eutropius, it was the crafty practice of Dioclesian to assume all the merit of popular mea-

sures as emanating from himself alone, while in those which were unpopular, he pretended to act altogether by the advice of others.

tity of their persons from corporal chastisement or torture; slaves were declared incapable of claiming or obtaining liberty; the whole race were placed without the pale of the law, disqualified from appealing to its protection in case of wrong, as of personal injury, of robbery, or adultery; while they were liable to civil actions, and bound to bear all the burdens of the state, and amenable to all its penalties. In many places, an altar was placed before the tribunal of justice, on which the plaintiff was obliged to sacrifice, before his cause could obtain a hearing (1).

Edict torn  
down.

No sooner had this edict been affixed in the customary place, than it was torn down by the hand of a rash and indignant Christian, who added insult to his offence by a contemptuous inscription. "Such are the victories of the Emperors over the Goths and Sarmatians (2)." This outrage on the imperial majesty was expiated by the death of the delinquent, who avowed his glorious crime. Although less discreet Christians might secretly dignify the sufferings of the victim with the honours of martyrdom, they could only venture to approve the patience with which he bore the agony of being roasted alive by a slow fire (3).

Fire in the  
palace at  
Nicome-  
dia.

The prudence or the moderation of Dioclesian had rejected the more violent and sanguinary counsels of the Cæsar, who had proposed that all who refused to sacrifice should be burned alive. But his personal terrors triumphed over the lingering influence of compassion or justice. On a sudden, a fire burst out in the palace of Nicomedia, which spread almost to the chamber of the Emperor. The real origin of this fatal conflagration is unknown; and notwithstanding the various causes to which it was ascribed by the fears, the malice, and the superstition of the different classes, we may probably refer the whole to accident. It may have arisen from the hasty or injudicious construction of a palace built but recently. One account ascribes it to lightning. If this opinion obtained general belief among the Christian party, it would, no doubt, be considered by many, a visible sign of the Divine vengeance, on account of the promulgation of the imperial edict. The Christians were accused by the indignant voice of the Heathen; they retorted, by throwing the guilt upon the Emperor Galerius, who had practised (so the ecclesiastical historian suggests) the part of a secret incendiary, in order to criminate the Christians, and alarm Dioclesian into his more violent measures (4).

The obvious impolicy of such a measure, as the chance of actually destroying both their imperial enemies in the fire, must have been very remote, and as it could only darken the subtle mind of Dioclesian with the blackest suspicions, and madden Galerius to

(1) Euseb. viii. 2. De Mort Persecut. apud Lactantium.

(2) Mosheim, de Reb. Christ.

(3) Euseb. viii. 5.

(4) Euseb. iii. 6.

more unmeasured hostility, must acquit the Christians of any such design, even if their high principles, their sacred doctrines of peaceful submission, even under the direst persecution, did not place them above all suspicion. The only Christian who would have incurred the guilt, or provoked upon his innocent brethren the danger inseparable from such an act, would have been some desperate fanatic, like the man who tore down the edict. And such a man would have avowed and gloried in the act; he would have courted the ill-deserved honours of martyrdom. The silence of Constantine may clear Galerius of the darker charge of contriving, by these base and indirect means, the destruction of a party against which he proceeded with undisguised hostility. Galerius, however, as if aware of the full effect, with which such an event would work on the mind of Dioclesian, immediately left Nicomedia, declaring that he could not consider his person safe within that city.

The consequences of this fatal conflagration were disastrous, to the utmost extent which their worst enemies could desire, to the whole Christian community. The officers of the household, the inmates of the palace, were exposed to the most cruel tortures, by the order, as is said, even in the presence, of Dioclesian. Even the females of the imperial family were not exempt, if from the persecution, from that suspicion which demanded the clearest evidence of their Paganism. Prisca and Valeria were constrained to pollute themselves with sacrifice; the powerful eunuchs, Dorotheus and Gorgonius, and Andreas, suffered death; Anthimus, the Bishop of Nicomedia, was beheaded. Many were executed, many burnt alive, many laid bound, with stones round their necks, in boats, rowed into the midst of the lake, and thrown into the water.

From Nicomedia, the centre of the persecution, the imperial edicts were promulgated, though with less than the usual rapidity, through the East; letters were despatched requiring the co-operation of the Western Emperors, Maximian, the associate of Dioclesian, and the Cæsar Constantius, in the restoration of the dignity of the ancient religion, and the suppression of the hostile faith. Constantius made a show of concurrence in the measures of his colleagues; he commanded the demolition of the churches, but abstained from all violence against the persons of the Christians (1). Gaul alone, his favoured province, was not defiled by Christian blood. The fiercer temper of Maximian only awaited the signal, and readily acceded, to carry into effect the barbarous edicts of his colleagues.

In almost every part of the world, Christianity found itself at once assailed by the full force of the civil power, constantly goaded

The persecution becomes general.

April 18.

(1) Eusebius, whose panegyric on Constantine throws back some of its adulation upon his father, makes Constantius a Christian, with the Christian service regularly performed in his

palace. Vit. Constant. c. 33. The exaggeration of this statement is exposed by Pagi, ad ann. 303, n. viii. Mosheim, de Rebus ante Const. Mag. p. 929—935.



on by the united influence of the Pagan priesthood and the philosophic party. Nor was Dioclesian, now committed in the desperate strife, content with the less tyrannical and sanguinary edict of Nicomedia. Vague rumours of insurrection, some tumultuary risings in regions which were densely peopled with Christians, and even the enforced assumption of the purple by two adventurers, one in Armenia, another in Antioch, seemed to countenance the charges of political ambition, and the design of armed and vigorous resistance.

It is the worst evil of religious contest that the civil power cannot retract without the humiliating confession of weakness, and must go on increasing in the severity of its measures. It soon finds that there is no success short of the extermination of the adversary; and it has but the alternative of acknowledged failure, and this internecine warfare. The demolition of the churches might remove objects offensive to the wounded pride of the dominant Polytheism; the destruction of the sacred books might gratify the jealous hostility of the philosophic party; but not a single community was dissolved. The precarious submission of the weaker Christians only confirmed the more resolute opposition of the stronger and more heroic adherents of Christianity.

Edict followed edict, rising in regular gradations of angry barbarity. The whole clergy were declared enemies of the state; they were seized wherever an hostile præfect chose to put forth his boundless authority; and bishops, presbyters, and deacons were crowded into the prisons intended for the basest malefactors. A new rescript prohibited the liberation of any of these prisoners, unless they should consent to offer sacrifice.

During the promulgation of these rescripts, Dioclesian celebrated his triumph in Rome; he held a conference with the Cæsar of Africa, who entered into his rigorous measures. On his return to Nicomedia, he was seized with that long and depressing malady which, whether it affected him with temporary derangement, secluded him within the impenetrable precincts of the palace, whose sacred secrets were forbidden to be betrayed to the popular ear. This rigid concealment gave currency to every kind of gloomy rumour. The whole Roman world awaited with mingled anxiety, hope, and apprehension, the news of his dissolution. Dioclesian, to the universal astonishment, appeared again in the robes of empire; to their still greater astonishment, he appeared only to lay them aside, to abdicate the throne, and to retire to the peaceful occupation of his palace and agricultural villa on the Illyrian shore of the Adriatic. His colleague Maximian, with ill-dissembled reluctance, followed the example of his colleague, patron, and coadjutor in the Empire.

The great scheme of Dioclesian, the joint administration of the empire by associate Augusti, with their subordinate Cæsars, if it

Illness.

And abdication of Dioclesian,  
A. D. 304.

had averted for a time the dismemberment of the empire, and had introduced some vigour into the provincial governments, had introduced other evils of appalling magnitude; but its fatal consequences were more manifest directly the master hand was withdrawn which had organised the new machine of government. Fierce jealousy succeeded at once among the rival Emperors, to decent concord; all subordination was lost; and a succession of civil wars between the contending sovereigns distracted the whole world. The earth groaned under the separate tyranny of its many masters; and, according to the strong expression of a rhetorical writer, the grinding taxation had so exhausted the proprietors and the cultivators of the soil, the merchants, and the artisans, that none remained to tax but beggars (1). The sufferings of the Christians, however still inflicted with unremitting barbarity, were lost in the common sufferings of mankind. The rights of Roman citizenship, which had been violated in their persons, were now universally neglected; and, to extort money, the chief persons of the towns, the unhappy decurions, who were responsible for the payment of the contributions, were put to the torture. Even the punishment, the roasting by a slow fire,—invented to force the conscience of the devout Christians,—was borrowed, in order to wring the reluctant impost from the unhappy provincial.

General  
misery.

The abdication of Dioclesian left the most implacable enemy of Christianity, Galerius, master of the East; and in the East the persecution of the Christians, as well as the general oppression of the subjects of the empire, continued in unmitigated severity. His nephew, the Cæsar, Maximin Daïas, was the legitimate heir to his relentless violence of temper, and to his stern hostility to the Christian name. In the West, the assumption of the purple by Maxentius, the son of the abdicated Maximian (Herculius), had no unfavourable effect on the situation of the Christians. They suffered only with the rest of their fellow subjects from the vices of Maxentius. If their matrons and virgins were not secure from his lust, it was the common lot of all, who, although of the highest rank and dignity, might attract his insatiable passions. If a Christian matron, the wife of a senator, submitted to a voluntary death (2) rather than to the loss of her honour, it was her beauty, not her Christianity, which marked her out as the victim of the tyrant. It was not until Constantine began to develope his ambitious views of reuniting the dismembered monarchy, that Maxentius threw himself, as it were, upon the ancient gods of Rome, and identified his own cause with that of Polytheism. At this juncture all eyes were turned towards the elder son of Constantius. If not already recognised by the prophetic glance of devout hope as the first Christian

Galerius  
Emperor  
of the  
East.  
Maximin  
Daïas.

Maxen-  
tius.

Constan-  
tine.

(1) De Mort, Persecut. c. xxiii.

(2) Euseb. viii. 14.

sovereign of Rome, he seemed placed by providential wisdom as the protector, as the head, of the Christian interest. The enemies of Christianity were his; and if he was not, as yet, bound by the hereditary attachment of a son to the religion of his mother Helena, his father Constantius had bequeathed him the wise example of humanity and toleration. Placed as a hostage in the hands of Galerius, Constantine had only escaped from the honourable captivity of the Eastern court, where he had been exposed to constant peril of his life, by the promptitude and rapidity of his movements. He had fled, and during the first stages maimed the post-horses which might have been employed in his pursuit. During the persecution of Dioclesian, Constantius alone, of all the Emperors, by a dexterous appearance of submission, had screened the Christians of Gaul from the common lot of their brethren. Nor was it probable that Constantine would render, on this point, more willing allegiance to the sanguinary mandates of Galerius. At present, however, Constantine stood rather aloof from the affairs of Italy and the East; and till the resumption of the purple by the elder Maximian, his active mind was chiefly employed in the consolidation of his own power in Gaul, and the repulse of the German barbarians, who threatened the frontiers of the Rhine.

A. D. 309.

Notwithstanding the persecution had now lasted for six or seven years, in no part of the world did Christianity betray any signs of vital decay. It was far too deeply rooted in the minds of men, far too extensively promulgated, far too vigorously organised, not to endure this violent but unavailing shock. If its public worship was suspended, the believers met in secret, or cherished in the unsailable privacy of the heart, the inalienable rights of conscience. If it suffered numerical loss, the body was not weakened by the severance of its more feeble and worthless members. The inert resistance of the general mass wearied out the vexatious and harassing measures of the government. Their numbers secured them against general extermination; but, of course, the persecution fell most heavily upon the most eminent of the body; upon men, who were deeply pledged by the sense of shame and honour, even, if in any case, the nobler motives of conscientious faith and courageous confidence in the truth of the religion were wanting, to bear with unyielding heroism the utmost barbarities of the persecutor. Those who submitted performed the hated ceremony with visible reluctance, with trembling hand, averted countenance, and deep remorse of heart; those who resisted to death were animated by the presence of multitudes, who, if they dared not applaud, could scarcely conceal their admiration; women crowded to kiss the hems of their garments, and their scattered ashes, or unburied bones, were stolen away by the devout zeal of their adherents, and already began to be treasured as incentives to faith and piety. It cannot be

Sufferings  
of the  
Christians.



supposed that the great functionaries of the state, the civil or military governors, could be so universally seared to humanity, or so incapable of admiring these frequent examples of patient heroism, as not either to mitigate in some degree the sufferings which they were bound to inflict, or even to feel some secret sympathy with the blameless victims whom they condemned, which might ripen, at a more fortunate period, into sentiments still more favourable to the Christian cause.

The most signal and unexpected triumph of Christianity was over the author of the persecution. While victory and success appeared to follow that party in the state which, if they had not as yet openly espoused the cause of Christianity, had unquestionably its most ardent prayers in their favour; the enemies of the Christians were smitten with the direst calamities, and the Almighty appeared visibly to exact the most awful vengeance for their sufferings. Galerius himself was forced, as it were, to implore mercy; not indeed in the attitude of penitence, but of profound humiliation, at the foot of the Christian altar. In the eighteenth year of his reign, the persecutor lay expiring of a most loathsome malady. A deep and fetid ulcer preyed on the lower regions of his body, and eat them away into a mass of living corruption. It is certainly singular that the disease, vulgarly called being “eaten of worms,” should have been the destiny of Herod the Great, of Galerius, and of Philip II. of Spain. Physicians were sought from all quarters; every oracle was consulted in vain; that of Apollo suggested a cure, which aggravated the virulence of the disease. Not merely the chamber, the whole palace, of Galerius is described as infected by the insupportable stench which issued from his wound; while the agonies which he suffered might have satiated the worst vengeance of the most unchristian enemy.

From the dying bed of Galerius issued an edict, which, while it condescended to apologise for the past severities against the Christians, under the specious plea of regard for the public welfare and the unity of the state; while it expressed compassion for his deluded subjects, whom the government was unwilling to leave in the forlorn condition of being absolutely without a religion, admitted to the fullest extent the total failure of the severe measures for the suppression of Christianity (1). It permitted the free and public exercise of the Christian religion. Its close was still more remarkable; it contained an earnest request to the Christians to intercede for the suffering Emperor in their supplications to their God. Whether this edict was dictated by wisdom, by remorse, or by superstitious terror; whether it was the act of a statesman, convinced by experience of the impolicy, or even the injustice, of his

Edict of  
Galerius.  
A. D. 311.  
April 30.

(1) Euseb. E. H. viii. 17.

sanguinary acts : whether, in the agonies of his excruciating disease, his conscience was harassed by the thought of his tortured victims ; or, having vainly solicited the assistance of his own deities, he would desperately endeavour to propitiate the favour, or, at least, allay the wrath, of the Christians' God ; the whole Roman world was witness of the public and humiliating acknowledgment of defeat, extorted from the dying Emperor. A few days after the promulgation of the edict, Galerius expired.

A. D. 311.  
May.

The edict was issued from Sardica, in the name of Galerius, of Licinius, and of Constantine. It accorded with the sentiments of the two latter : Maximin alone, the Cæsar of the East, whose peculiar jurisdiction extended over Syria and Egypt, rendered but an imperfect and reluctant obedience to the decree of toleration. His jealousy was, no doubt, excited by the omission of his name in the preamble to the edict ; and he seized this excuse to discountenance its promulgation in his provinces. Yet for a time he suppressed his profound and inveterate hostility to the Christian name. He permitted unwritten orders to be issued to the municipal governors of the towns, and to the magistrates of the villages, to put an end to all violent proceedings. The zeal of Sabinus, the Prætorian Præfect of the East, supposing the milder sentiments of Galerius to be shared by Maximin, seems to have outrun the intentions of the Cæsar. A circular rescript appeared in his name, echoing the tone, though it did not go quite to the length, of the imperial edict. It proclaimed, " that it had been the anxious wish of the divinity of the most mighty Emperors to reduce the whole empire to pay an harmonious and united worship to the immortal gods. But their clemency had at length taken compassion on the obstinate perversity of the Christians, and determined on desisting from their ineffectual attempts to force them to abandon their hereditary faith." The magistrates were instructed to communicate the contents of this letter to each other. The governors of the provinces, supposing at once that the letter of the Præfect contained the real sentiments of the Emperor, with merciful haste, despatched orders to all persons in subordinate civil or military command, the magistrates both of the towns and the villages, who acted upon them with unhesitating obedience (1).

Conduct  
of Maxi-  
min in the  
East.

The cessation of the persecution showed at once its extent. The prison doors were thrown open ; the mines rendered up their condemned labourers ; every where long trains of Christians were seen hastening to the ruins of their churches, and visiting the places sanctified by their former devotion. The public roads, the streets, and market-places of the towns were crowded with long processions, singing psalms of thanksgiving for their deliverance.

(1) Euseb. ix. 1.

Those who had maintained their faith under these severe trials passed triumphant in conscious, even if lowly pride, amid the flattering congratulations of their brethren; those who had failed in the hour of affliction hastened to reunite themselves with their God, and to obtain readmission into the flourishing and reunited fold. The Heathen themselves were astonished, it is said, at this signal mark of the power of the Christians' God, who had thus unexpectedly wrought so sudden a revolution in favour of his worshippers (1).

But the cause of the Christians might appear not yet sufficiently avenged. The East, the great scene of persecution, was not restored to prosperity or peace. It had neither completed nor expiated the eight years of relentless persecution. The six months of apparent reconciliation were occupied by the Cæsar Maximin in preparing measures of more subtle and profound hostility. The situation of Maximin himself was critical and precarious. On the death of Galerius, he had seized on the government of the whole of Asia, and the forces of the two Emperors, Licinius and Maximin, watched each other on either side of the Bosphorus, with jealous and ill-dissembled hostility. Throughout the West, the Emperors were favourable, or at least not inimical, to Christianity. The political difficulties, even the vices of Maximin, enforced the policy of securing the support of a large and influential body; he placed himself at the head of the Pagan interest in the East. A deliberate scheme was laid for the advancement of one party in the popular favour, for the depression of the other. Measures were systematically taken to enfeeble the influence of Christianity, not by the authority of government, but by poisoning the public mind, and infusing into it a settled and conscientious animosity. False acts of Pilate were forged, intended to cast discredit on the divine founder of Christianity; they were disseminated with the utmost activity. The streets of Antioch and other Eastern cities were placarded with the most calumnious statements of the origin of the Christian faith. The instructors of youth were directed to introduce them as lessons into the schools, to make their pupils commit them to memory; and boys were heard repeating, or grown persons chanting, the most scandalous blasphemies against the object of Christian adoration (2). In Damascus, the old arts of compelling or persuading women to confess that they had been present at the rites of the Christians, which had ended in lawless and promiscuous license, were renewed. The confession of some miserable prostitutes was submitted to the Emperor, published by his command, and disseminated throughout the Eastern cities, although the Christian

Maximian  
hostile to  
Christi-  
anity.

A. D. 311.

(1) Euseb. E. H. ix, 1.

(2) In the speech attributed to S. Lucianus, previous to his martyrdom at Nicomedia, there is an allusion to these acts of Pilate, which

shows that they had made considerable impression on the public mind. Routh, Reliquiæ Sacræ, iii. 286.



rites had been long celebrated in those cities with the utmost publicity (1).

Reorgan-  
isation of  
Paganism.

The second measure of Maximin was the reorganisation of the Pagan religion in all its original pomp, and more than its ancient power. A complete hierarchy was established on the model of the Christian episcopacy. Provincial pontiffs, men of the highest rank, were nominated; they were inaugurated with a solemn and splendid ceremonial, and were distinguished by a tunic of white. The Emperor himself assumed the appointment of the pontifical offices in the different towns, which had in general rested with the local authorities. Persons of rank and opulence were prevailed on to accept these sacred functions, and were thus committed by personal interest and corporate attachment, in the decisive struggle. Sacrifices were performed with the utmost splendour and regularity, and the pontiffs were invested with power to compel the attendance of all the citizens. The Christians were liable to every punishment or torture, short of death. The Pagan interest having thus become predominant in the greater cities, addresses were artfully suggested, and voted by the acclaiming multitude, imploring the interference of the Emperor to expel these enemies of the established religion from their walls. The rescripts of the Emperor were engraved on brass, and suspended in the public parts of the city. The example was set by Antioch, once the head-quarters, and still, no doubt, a stronghold of Christianity. Theotecnus, the logistes or chamberlain of the city, took the lead. A splendid image was erected to Jupiter Philius, and dedicated with all the imposing pomp of mystery, perhaps of Eastern magic (2). As though they would enlist that strong spirit of mutual attachment which bound the Christians together, the ancient Jupiter was invested in the most engaging and divine attribute of the God of Christianity—he was the God of Love. Nicomedia, the capital of the East, on the entrance of the Emperor, presented an address to the same effect as those which had been already offered by Antioch, Tyre, and other cities; and the Emperor affected to yield to this simultaneous expression of the general sentiment.

Persecu-  
tions in  
the domi-  
nions of  
Maximin.

The first overt act of hostility was a prohibition to the Christians to meet in their cemeteries, where probably their enthusiasm was wrought to the utmost height by the sacred thoughts associated with the graves of their martyrs. But the policy of Maximin, in general, confined itself to vexatious and harassing oppression, and to other punishments, which inflicted the pain and wretchedness without the dignity of dying for the faith: the persecuted had the sufferings, but not the glory of martyrdom. Such, most likely, were the general orders of Maximin, though, in some places, the zeal of

(1) Euseb. viii. 14.

(2) Euseb. ix. 2, 3.

his officers may have transgressed the prescribed limits, it must not be said, of humanity. The Bishop and two inhabitants of Emesa, and Peter, the Patriarch of Alexandria, obtained the honours of death. Lucianus, the Bishop of Antioch, was sent to undergo a public examination at Nicomedia : he died in prison. The greater number of victims suffered the less merciful punishment of mutilation or excæcation. The remonstrances of Constantine were unavailing ; the Emperor persisted in his cruel course ; and is said to have condescended to an ingenious artifice to afflict the sensitive consciences of some persons of the higher orders, who escaped less painful penalties. His banquets were served with victims previously slain in sacrifice, and his Christian guests were thus unconsciously betrayed into a crime, which the authority of St. Paul had not yet convinced the more scrupulous believers to be a matter of perfect indifference (1).

The Emperor, in his public rescript, in answer to the address from the city of Tyre, had, as it were, placed the issue of the contest on an appeal to Heaven. The gods of Paganism were asserted to be the benefactors of the human race ; through their influence, the soil had yielded its annual increase ; the genial air had not been parched by fatal droughts ; the sea had neither been agitated with tempests nor swept by hurricanes ; the earth, instead of being rocked by volcanic convulsions, had been the peaceful and fertile mother of its abundant fruits. Their own neighbourhood spoke the manifest favour of these benignant deities, in its rich fields, waving with harvests, its flowery and luxuriant meadows, and in the mild and genial temperature of the air. A city so blest by its tutelary gods, in prudence as well as in justice, would expel those traitorous citizens whose impiety endangered these blessings, and would wisely purify its walls from the infection of their heaven-despising presence.

The Pagans appeal to the flourishing state of the East.

But peace and prosperity by no means ensued upon the depression of the Christians. Notwithstanding the embellishment of the Heathen temples ; the restoration of the Polytheistic ceremonial in more than ordinary pomp ; and the nomination of the noblest citizens to the pontifical offices, every kind of calamity,—tyranny, war, pestilence, and famine,—depopulated the Asiatic provinces. Not the least scourge of the Pagan East was the Pagan Emperor himself. Christian writers may have exaggerated, they can scarcely have invented, the vices of Maximin. His lusts violated alike the honour of noble and plebeian families. The eunuchs, the purveyors for his passions, traversed the provinces, marked out those who were distinguished by fatal beauty, and conducted these extraordinary perquisitions with the most insolent indignity : where milder

Reverse.

A. D. 312.

Tyranny of Maximin.

(1) Euseb. ix. 7.

measures would not prevail, force was used. Nor was tyranny content with the gratification of its own license : noble virgins, after having been dishonoured by the Emperor were granted in marriage to his slaves ; even those of the highest rank were consigned to the embraces of a barbarian husband. Valeria, the widow of Galerius, and the daughter of Dioclesian, was first insulted by proposals of marriage from Maximin, whose wife was still living, and then forced to wander through the Eastern provinces in the humblest disguise, till, at length, she perished at Tesselonica by the still more unjustifiable sentence of Licinius.

War with  
Armenia.

The war of Maximin with Armenia was wantonly undertaken in a spirit of persecution. This earliest Christian kingdom was attached, in all the zeal of recent proselytism, to the new religion. That part which acknowledged the Roman sway was commanded to abandon Christianity ; and the legions of Rome were employed in forcing the reluctant kingdom to obedience (1).

Famine.

But these were foreign calamities. Throughout the dominions of Maximin the summer rains did not fall ; a sudden famine desolated the whole East ; corn rose to an unprecedented price (2). Some large villages were entirely depopulated ; many opulent families were reduced to beggary, and persons in a decent station sold their children as slaves. The rapacity of the Emperor aggravated the general misery. The granaries of individuals were seized, and their stores closed up by the imperial seal. The flocks and herds were driven away, to be offered in unavailing sacrifices to the gods. The court of the Emperor, in the meantime, insulted the general suffering by its excessive luxury ; his foreign and barbarian troops lived in a kind of free quarters, in wasteful plenty, and plundered

Pestilence.

on all sides with perfect impunity. The scanty and unwholesome food produced its usual effect, a pestilential malady. Carbuncles broke out all over the bodies of those who were seized with the disorder, but particularly attacked the eyes, so that multitudes became helplessly and incurably blind. The houses of the wealthy, which were secure against the famine, seemed particularly marked out by the pestilence. The hearts of all classes were hardened by the extent of the calamity. The most opulent, despairing of diminishing the vast mass of misery, or of relieving the swarms of beggars who filled every town and city, gave up the fruitless endeavour. The Christians alone took a nobler and evangelic revenge upon their suffering enemies. They were active in allaying those miseries of which they were the common victims. The ecclesiastical historian claims no exemption for the Christians from the general calamity, but honourably boasts that they alone displayed the offices of humanity and brotherhood. They were every where,

(1) Euseb. ix. 8.

(2) The statement in the text of Eusebius, as

it stands, is utterly incredible,—a measure of wheat at 2500 attics (drachms), from 70%, to 80%.



tending the living, and burying the dead. They distributed bread; they visited the infected houses; they scared away the dogs which preyed, in open day, on the bodies in the streets, and rendered to them the decent honours of burial. The myriads who perished, and were perishing, in a state of absolute desertion, could not but acknowledge that Christianity was stronger than love of kindred. The fears and the gratitude of mankind were equally awakened in their favour; the fears which could not but conclude these calamities to be the vengeance of Heaven for the persecutions of its favoured people; the gratitude to those who thus repaid good for evil in the midst of a hostile and exasperated society (1).

Before we turn our attention to the West, and follow the triumphant career of Constantine to the reconsolidation of the empire in his person, and the triumph of Christianity through his favour, it may be more consistent with the distinct view of these proceedings, to violate in some degree the order of time, and follow to its close the history of the Christian persecutions in the East.

Maximin took the alarm, and endeavoured, too late, to retrace his steps. He issued an edict, in which he avowed the plain principles of toleration, and ascribed his departure from that salutary policy to the importunate zeal of his capital and of other cities, which he could not treat with disrespect, but which had demanded the expulsion of the Christians from their respective territories. He commanded the suspension of all violent measures, and recommended only mild and persuasive means to win back these apostates to the religion of their forefathers. The Christians, who had once been deluded by a show of mercy, feared to reconstruct their fallen edifices, or to renew their public assemblies, and awaited, in trembling expectation, the issue of the approaching contest with Licinius (2).

Maximin  
retracts  
his perse-  
cuting  
edict.

The victory of Constantine over Maxentius had left him master of Rome. Constantine and Licinius reigned over all the European provinces; and the public edict for the toleration of Christianity, issued in the name of these two Emperors, announced the policy of the Western empire.

After the defeat of Maximin by Licinius, his obscure death gave ample scope for the crudulous, if not inventive malice of his enemies, to ascribe to his last moments every excess of weakness and cruelty, as well as of suffering. He is said to have revenged his baffled hopes of victory on the Pagan priesthood, who incited him to the war, by a promiscuous massacre of all within his power. His last imperial act was the promulgation of another edict (3), still more explicitly favourable to the Christians, in which he not merely proclaimed an unrestricted liberty of conscience, but re-

A. D. 313.

Death of  
Maximin.

(1) Euseb. ix. 9.

(2) Euseb. viii. 14.

(3) Edict of toleration issued from Nicomedia,  
A. D. 313, 13th June.

stored the confiscated property of their churches. His bodily sufferings completed the dark catalogue of persecuting Emperors who had perished under the most excruciating torments : his body was slowly consumed by an internal fire (1).

The new  
Paganism  
falls with  
Maximin.

With Maximin expired the last hope of Paganism to maintain itself by the authority of the government. Though Licinius was only accidentally connected with the Christian party, and afterwards allied himself for a short time to the Pagan interest, at this juncture his enemies were those of Christianity ; and his cruel triumph annihilated at once the adherents of Maximin, and those of the old religion. The new hierarchy fell at once ; the chief magistrates of almost all the cities were executed ; for even where they were not invested in the pontifical offices, it was under their authority that Paganism had renewed its more imposing form and sank with them into the common ruin. The arts by which Theotecnus, of Antioch, the chief adviser of Maximin, had imposed upon the populace of that city by mysterious wonders, were detected and exposed to public contempt, and the author put to death. Tyre, which had recommended itself to Maximin by the most violent hostility to the Christian name, was constrained to witness the reconstruction of the fallen church in far more than its original grandeur. Eusebius, afterwards the Bishop of Cæsarea, and the historian of the Church, pronounced an inaugural discourse on its reconsecration. His description of the building is curious in itself, as the model of an Eastern church, and illustrates the power and opulence of the Christian party in a city which had taken the lead on the side of Paganism. Nor would the Christian orator venture greatly to exaggerate the splendour of a building which stood in the midst, and provoked, as it were, a comparison with temples of high antiquity, and unquestioned magnificence.

Rebuild-  
ing of the  
church of  
Tyre.

The Christian church was built on the old site ; for, though a more convenient and imposing space might have been found, the piety of the Christians clung with reverence to a spot consecrated by the most holy associations ; and their pride, perhaps, was gratified in restoring to more than its former grandeur the edifice which had been destroyed by Pagan malice. The whole site was environed with a wall ; a lofty propylæon, which faced the rising sun, commanded the attention of the passing Pagan, who could not but contrast the present splendour with the recent solitude of the place ; and afforded an imposing glimpse of the magnificence within. The intermediate space between the propylæon and the church, was laid out in a cloister with four colonnades, enclosed with a palisade of wood. The centre square was open to the sun and air, and two fountains sparkled in the midst, and reminded the

worshipper, with their emblematic purity, of the necessity of sanctification. The uninitiate proceeded no farther than the cloister, but might behold at this modest distance the mysteries of the sanctuary. Several other vestibules, or propylæa, intervened between the cloister and the main building. The three gates of the church fronted the East, of which the central was the loftiest and most costly, "like a queen between her attendants." It was adorned with plates of brass and richly sculptured reliefs. Two colonnades, or aisles, ran along the main building, above which were windows, which lighted the edifice; other buildings for the use of the ministers adjoined. Unfortunately, the pompous eloquence of Eusebius would not condescend to the vulgar details of measurements, and dwells only in vague terms of wonder at the spaciousness, the heaven-soaring loftiness, the splendour of the interior. The roof was of beams from the cedars of Lebanon, the floor inlaid with marble. In the centre rose the altar which had already obtained the name of the place of sacrifice; it was guarded from the approach of the profane by a trellis of the most slender and graceful workmanship. Lofty seats were prepared for the higher orders, and benches for those of lower rank were arranged with regularity throughout the building. Tyre, no doubt, did not stand alone in this splendid restoration of her Christian worship; and Christianity, even before its final triumph, under Constantine, before the restoration of their endowments, and the munificent imperial gifts, possessed sufficient wealth at least to commence these costly undertakings.





COLLECTION  
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VOL. CCXCII.

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HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

II.

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PRINTED BY CRAPELET, 9, RUE DE VAUGIRARD.



THE HISTORY  
OF  
CHRISTIANITY,

FROM  
THE BIRTH OF CHRIST  
TO  
THE ABOLITION OF PAGANISM  
IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

BY  
THE REV. H. H. MILMAN,  
PREBENDARY OF ST. PETER'S, AND MINISTER OF ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

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VOL. II.



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1840.



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# HISTORY

## OF

# CHRISTIANITY.



### BOOK III.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### CONSTANTINE.

THE reign of Constantine the Great forms one of the epochs in the history of the world. It is the æra of the dissolution of the Roman Empire ; the commencement, or rather consolidation, of a kind of Eastern despotism, with a new capital, a new patriciate, a new constitution, a new financial system, a new, though as yet imperfect, jurisprudence, and, finally, a new religion. Already, in the time of Dioclesian, Italy had sunk into a province ; Rome into *one* of the great cities of the empire. The declension of her importance had been gradual, but inevitable ; her supremacy had been shaken by that slow succession of changes which had imperceptibly raised the relative weight and dignity of other parts of the empire, and of the empire itself, as a whole, until she ceased to be the central point of the administration of public affairs. Rome was no longer the heart of the social system, from which emanated all the life and power which animated and regulated the vast and unwieldy body, and to which flowed in the wealth and the homage of the obedient world. The admission of the whole empire to the rights of Roman citizenship by Caracalla had dissolved the commanding spell which centuries of glory and conquest had attached to the majesty of the Roman name. To be a Roman was no longer a privilege ; it gave no distinctive rights, its exemptions were either taken away, or vulgarised by being made common to all except the servile order. The secret once betrayed that the imperial dignity might be conferred elsewhere than in the imperial city, lowered still more the pre-eminence of Rome. From that time, the seat of government was at the head of the army. If the Emperor, proclaimed in Syria, in

Reign of  
Constantine.

Change in  
the em-  
pire.

Degrada-  
tion of  
Rome.

Illyria, or in Britain, condescended, without much delay, to visit the ancient capital, the trembling senate had but to ratify the decree of the army, and the Roman people to welcome, with submissive acclamations, their new master.

Dioclesian had consummated the degradation of Rome, by transferring the residence of the court to Nicomedia. He had commenced the work of reconstructing the empire upon a new basis ; some of his measures were vigorous, comprehensive, and tending to the strength and consolidation of the social edifice ; but he had introduced a principle of disunion, more than powerful enough to counteract all the energy which he had infused into the executive government. His fatal policy of appointing co-ordinate sovereigns, two Augusti, with powers avowedly equal, and two Cæsars, with authority nominally subordinate, but which, in able hands, would not long have brooked inferiority, had nearly dismembered the solid unity of the empire. As yet, the influence of the Roman name was commanding and awful ; the provinces were accustomed to consider themselves as parts of one political confederacy ; the armies marched still under the same banners, were united by discipline, and as yet by the unforgotten inheritance of victory from their all-subduing ancestors. In all parts of the world, every vestige of civil independence had long been effaced ; centuries of servitude had destroyed every dangerous memorial of ancient dynasties or republican constitutions. Hence, therefore, the more moderate ambition of erecting an independent kingdom, never occurred to any of the rival Emperors ; or, if the separation had been attempted ; if a man of ability had endeavoured to partition off one great province, dependent upon its own resources, defended by its own legions, or, on a well organised force of auxiliary barbarians ; the age was not yet ripe for such a daring innovation. The whole empire would have resented the secession of any member from the ancient confederacy, and turned its concentrated force against the recreant apostate from the majestic unity of imperial Rome. Yet, if this system had long prevailed, the disorganising must have finally triumphed over the associating principle : separate interests would have arisen ; a gradual departure from the uniform order of administration have taken place ; a national character might have developed itself in different quarters ; and the vast and harmonious edifice would have split asunder into distinct, and insulated, and at length hostile, kingdoms.

Nothing less than a sovereign, whose comprehensive mind could discern the exigencies of this critical period ; nothing less than a conqueror, who rested on the strength of successive victories over his competitors for the supremacy, could have reunited, and in time, under one vigorous administration, the dissolving elements of the empire.

Unity of  
the empire  
still pre-  
served.



Such a conqueror was Constantine : but, reunited, the empire imperiously demanded a complete civil reorganisation. It was not the foundation of the new capital which wrought the change in the state of the empire, it was the state of the empire which required a new capital. The ancient system of government, emanating entirely from Rome, and preserving, with sacred reverence, the old republican forms, had lost its awe ; the world acknowledged the master wherever it felt the power. The possession of Rome added no great weight to the candidate for empire, while its pretensions embarrassed the ruling sovereign (1). The powerless senate, which still expected to ratify the imperial decrees ; the patrician order, which had ceased to occupy the posts of honour, and danger, and distinction ; the turbulent populace, and the prætorian soldiery, who still presumed to assert their superiority over the legions who were bravely contesting the German or the Persian frontier ; the forms, the intrigues, the interests, the factions of such a city, would not be permitted by an Emperor accustomed to rule with absolute dominion in Treves, in Milan, or in Nicomedia, to clog the free movements of his administration. The dissolution of the prætorian bands by Constantine, on his victory over Maxentius, though necessary to the peace, was fatal to the power, of Rome. It cut off one of her great though dearly-purchased distinctions. Around the Asiatic, or the Illyrian, or the Gaulish court, had gradually arisen a new nobility, if not yet distinguished by title, yet, by service or by favour, possessing the marked and acknowledged confidence of the Emperor, and filling all offices of power and of dignity—a nobility independent of patrician descent, or the tenure of property in Italy. Ability in the field or in the council, or even court intrigue, would triumph over the claims of hereditary descent ; and all that remained was to decorate with title, and organise into a new aristocracy, those who already possessed the influence and the authority of rank. With Emperors of provincial or barbarous descent naturally arose a race of military or civil servants, strangers to Roman blood, and to the Roman name. The will of the sovereign became the fountain of honour. New regulations of finance, and a jurisprudence, though adhering closely to the forms and the practice of the old institutions, new in its spirit and in the scope of many of its provisions, embraced the whole empire in its comprehensive sphere. It was no longer Rome which legislated for the world, but the legislation which comprehended Rome among the cities subject to its authority. The laws were neither issued nor ratified, they were only submitted to, by Rome.

New nobi-  
lity

The Roman religion sank with the Roman supremacy. The new

(1) Galerius (if we are to trust the hostile author of the *de Mort. Persecut.*) had never seen Rome before his invasion of Italy, and was unacquainted with its immense magnitude. Galerius,

according to the same authority, threatened, after his flight from Italy, to change the name of the empire, from Roman to Dacian—c. xxvii.).

State of  
the reli-  
gion of  
Rome.

empire welcomed the new religion as its ally and associate in the government of the human mind. The empire lent its countenance, its sanction, at length its power to Christianity; Christianity infused throughout the empire a secret principle of association, which, long after it had dissolved into separate and conflicting masses, held together, nevertheless, the loose and crumbling confederacy, and, at length, itself assuming the lost or abdicated sovereignty, compressed the whole into one system under a spiritual dominion. The papal, after some interval of confusion and disorganisation, succeeded the imperial autocracy over the European world.

Motives  
for the  
conversion  
of Constantine.

Of all historical problems, none has been discussed with a stronger bias of opinion, of passion, and of prejudice, according to the age, the nation, the creed, of the writer, than the conversion of Constantine, and the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the empire. Hypocrisy, policy, superstition, divine inspiration, have been in turn assigned as the sole or the predominant influence which, operating on the mind of the Emperor, decided at once the religious destiny of the empire. But there is nothing improbable in supposing that Constantine was actuated by concurrent, or even conflicting, motives; all of which united in enforcing the triumph of Christianity. There is nothing contradictory in the combination of the motives themselves, particularly if we consider them as operating with greater strength, or with successive paroxysms, as it were, of influence, during the different periods in the life of Constantine, on the soldier, the statesman, and the man. The soldier, at a perilous crisis, might appeal, without just notions of his nature, to the tutelary power of a deity to whom a considerable part of his subjects, and perhaps of his army, looked up with faith or with awe. The statesman may have seen the absolute necessity of basing his new constitution on religion; he may have chosen Christianity as obviously possessing the strongest, and still strengthening, hold upon the minds of his people. He might appreciate, with profound political sagacity, the moral influence of Christianity, as well as its tendency to enforce peaceful, if not passive, obedience to civil government. At a later period, particularly if the circumstances of his life threw him more into connection with the Christian priesthood, he might gradually adopt as a religion that which had commanded his admiration as a political influence. He might embrace, with ardent attachment, yet, after all, by no means with distinct apprehension, or implicit obedience to all its ordinances, that faith which alone seemed to survive amid the wreck of all other religious systems.

A rapid but comprehensive survey of the state of Christianity at this momentous period will explain the position in which it stood in relation to the civil government, to the general population of the empire, and to the ancient religion; and throw a clear and steady

light upon the manner in which it obtained its political as well as its spiritual dominion over the Roman world.

The third century of Christianity had been prolific in religious revolutions. In the East, the silent progress of the Gospel had been suddenly arrested; Christianity had been thrown back with irresistible violence on the Roman territory. An ancient religion, connected with the great political changes in the sovereignty of the Persian kingdom, revived in all the vigour and enthusiasm of a new creed; it was received as the associate and main support of the state. An hierarchy, numerous, powerful, and opulent, with all the union and stability of an hereditary caste, strengthened by large landed possessions, was reinvested in an authority almost co-ordinate with that of the sovereign. The restoration of Zoroastrianism, as the established and influential religion of Persia, is perhaps the only instance of the vigorous revival of a Pagan religion (1). Of the native religion of the Parthians, little, if any thing, is known. They were a Scythian race, who overran and formed a ruling aristocracy over the remains of the older Persian, and the more modern Grecian civilisation. The Scythian, or Tartar or Turcoman tribes, who have perpetually, from China westward, invaded and subdued the more polished nations, have never attempted to force their rude and shapeless deities, their more vulgar Shamanism, or even the Buddhism, which in its simpler form has prevailed among them to a great extent, on the nations over which they have ruled. The ancient Magian priesthood remained, if with diminished power, in great numbers, and not without extensive possessions in the eastern provinces of the Parthian empire. The temples raised by the Greek successors of Alexander, whether to Grecian deities, or blended with the Tsabaism or the Nature-worship of Babylonia or Syria, continued to possess their undiminished honours, with their ample endowments and their sacerdotal colleges. Some vestiges of the deification of the kings of the line of Arsaces seem to be discerned, but with doubtful certainty.

Revival of  
Zoroastrianism.

The earliest legendary history of Christianity assigns Parthia as the scene of Apostolic labours; it was the province of St. Thomas. But in the intermediate region, the great Babylonian province, there is the strongest evidence that Christianity had made an early, a rapid, and a successful progress. It was the residence, at least for a certain period, of the Apostle St. Peter (2). With what success it conducted its contest with Judaism, it is impossible to conjecture;

(1) The materials for this view of the restoration of the Persian religion are chiefly derived from the following sources :—Hyde, de Religione Persarum; Auquetil du Perron; Zendavesta, 3 vols.; the German translation of Du Perron, by Kleuker, with the very valuable volumes of appendix (Anhang); De Guignaut's

Translation of Creuzers Symbolik; Malcolm's History of Persia; Heeren, Ideen.

Some of these sources were not open to Gibbon when he composed his brilliant chapter on this subject.

(2) Compare note to Vol. I. p. 63.



for Judaism, which, after the second rebellion in the reign of Hadrian, maintained but a permissive and precarious existence in Palestine, flourished in the Babylonian province, with something of a national and independent character. The Resch Glutha, or Prince of the Captivity, far surpassed in the splendour of his court the patriarch of Tiberias; and the activity of their schools of learning, in Nahardea, in Sura, and in Pumbeditha, is attested by the vast compilation of the Babylonian Talmud (1). Nor does the Christianity of this region appear to have suffered from the persecuting spirit of the Magian hierarchy during the earlier conflicts for the Mesopotamian provinces, between the arms of Rome and Persia. Though one bishop ruled the united communities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the numbers of Christians in the rest of the province were probably far from inconsiderable.

It was in the ancient dominions of Darius and of Xerxes that the old religion of Zoroaster reassumed its power and authority. No sooner had Ardeschir Babhegan (the Artaxerxes of the Greeks) destroyed the last remains of the foreign Parthian dynasty, and reorganised the dominion of the native Persian kings, from the borders of Charismia to the Tigris (the Persian writers assert to the Euphrates) (2), than he hastened to environ his throne with the Magian hierarchy, and to re-establish the sacerdotal order in all its former dignity. But an ancient religion, which has sunk into obscurity, will not regain its full influence over the popular mind, unless reinvested in divine authority : intercourse with heaven must be renewed; the sanction and ratification of the deity must be public and acknowledged. Wonder and miracle are as necessary to the revival of an old, as to the establishment of a new religion. In the records of the Zoroastrian faith, which are preserved in the ancient language of the Zend, may be traced many singular provisions which bear the mark of great antiquity, and show the transition from a pastoral to an agricultural life (3). The cultivation of the soil; the propagation of fruit-trees, nowhere so luxuriant and various as in the districts which probably gave birth to the great religious legislator of the East, Balk, and the country of the modern Afghans; and the destruction of noxious animals, are among the primary obligations enforced on the followers of Zoroaster. A grateful people might look back with the deepest veneration on the author of a religious code so wisely beneficent; the tenth of the produce would be no disproportioned offering to the priesthood of a religion which had thus turned civilisation into a duty, and given a divine sanction to the first principles of human wealth and happiness. But a new impulse was necessary to a people which had long passed this state of transition, and were only reassuming the possessions of their ances-

(1) See History of the Jews, iii. 173. etc.

(2) Malcolm's History of Persia, i. 72.

(3) Compare Heeren, Ideen, and Rhode, die Heilige Sage des Zendvolks.

Restoration of Persian monarchy by Ardeschir Babhegan. Of the religion of Zoroaster.

tors, and reconstructing their famous monarchy. Zoroastrianism, like all other religions, had split into numerous sects; and an authoritative exposition of the Living Word of Zoroaster could alone restore its power and its harmony to the re-established Magianism of the realm of Ardeschir. Erdiviraph was the Magian, designated by his blameless innocence from his mother's womb, to renew the intercourse with the Divinity, and to unfold, on the authority of inspiration, the secrets of heaven and hell. Forty (according to one account, eighty thousand) of the Magian priesthood; the Archimage, who resided in Bactria, the Desturs and the Mobeds, had assembled to witness and sanction the important ceremony. They were successively reduced to 40,000, to 4000, to 400, to 40, to 7: the acknowledged merit of Erdiviraph gave him the pre-eminence among the seven (1). Having passed through the strictest ablutions, and drunk a powerful opiate, he was covered with a white linen, and laid to sleep. Watched by seven of the nobles, including the king, he slept for seven days and nights; and, on his reawakening, the whole nation listened with believing wonder to his exposition of the faith of Oromazd, which was carefully written down by an attendant scribe, for the benefit of posterity (2).

Vision of  
Erdivi-  
raph.

An hierarchy which suddenly regains its power, after centuries of obscurity, perhaps of oppression, will not be scrupulous as to the means of giving strength and permanence to its dominion. With Ardeschir, the restoration of the Persian people to their rank among the nations of the earth, by the re-infusion of a national spirit, was the noble object of ambition; the re-establishment of a national religion, as the strongest and most enduring bond of union, was an essential part of his great scheme; but a national religion, thus associated with the civil polity, is necessarily exclusive, and impatient of the rivalry of other creeds. Intolerance lies in the very nature of a religion which, dividing the whole world into the realm of two conflicting principles, raises one part of mankind into a privileged order, as followers of the good principle, and condemns the other half as the irreclaimable slaves of the evil one. The national worship is identified with that of Oromazd; and the kingdom of Oromazd must be purified from the intrusion of the followers of Ahriman. The foreign relations, so to speak, of the Persian monarchy, according to their old poetical history, are strongly coloured by their deep-rooted religious opinions. Their implacable enemies, the pastoral Tartar or Turcoman tribes, inhabit the realm of darkness, and invade at times and desolate the kingdom of light, till some mighty monarch, Kaiomers, or some redoubtable hero, Rustan,

Intolerance of  
the Ma-  
gian hier-  
archy.

(1) All these numbers, it should be observed, are multiples of 40, the indefinite number throughout the East. (See Bredow's Dissertation, annexed to the new edition of Syncellus; Byzant. Hist. Bonn.) The recusants of Zoroastrianism

(vid. infra) are in like manner reduced to seven, the sacred number with the Zoroastrian, as with the religion of the Old Testament.

(2) Hyde (from Persian authorities) de Reliq. Pers. p. 278, et seqq.

reasserts the majesty, and revenges the losses, of the kingdom of Oromazd. Iran and Turan are the representatives of the two conflicting worlds of light and darkness. In the same spirit, to expel, to persecute, the followers of other religions, was to expel, to trample on, the followers of Ahriman. This edict of Ardeschir closed all the temples but those of the fire-worshippers,—only eighty thousand followers of Ahriman, including the worshippers of foreign religions, and the less orthodox believers in Zoroastrianism, remained to infect the purified region of Oromazd (1). Of the loss sustained by Christianity during this conflict, in the proper dominions of Persia, and the number of churches which shared the fate of the Parthian and Grecian temples, there is no record. The persecutions by the followers of Zoroaster are only to be traced, at a later period, in Armenia, and in the Babylonian province; but Persia, from this time until the fiercer persecutions of their own brethren forced the Nestorian Christians to overleap every obstacle, presented a stern and insuperable barrier to the progress of Christianity (2). It cut off all connection with the Christian communities (if communities there were) in the remoter East (3).

Destruction of Christianity in Persia.

Ardeschir bequeathed to his royal descendants the solemn charge of maintaining the indissoluble union of the Magian religion with the state. “Never forget that, as a king, you are at once the protector of religion and of your country. Consider the altar and the throne as inseparable; they must always sustain each other. A sovereign without religion is a tyrant; and a people who have none, may be deemed the most monstrous of societies. Religion may exist without a state, but a state cannot exist without religion: it is by holy laws that a political association can alone be bound. You should be to your people an example of piety and virtue, but without pride or ostentation (4).” The kings of the race of Sassan accepted and fulfilled the sacred trust; the Magian hierarchy encircled and supported the kingly power of Persia. They formed the great council of the state. Foreign religions, if tolerated, were watched with jealous severity; Magianism was established at the point of the sword, in those parts of Armenia, which were subjugated by the Persian kings. When Mesopotamia was included within the pale of the Persian dominions, the Jews were, at times, exposed to the

Connection of the throne and the hierarchy.

(1) Gibbon, in his chapter on the restoration of the Persian monarchy and religion, has said that in this conflict “the sword of Aristotle (such was the name given by the Orientals to the Polytheism and philosophy of the Greeks) was easily broken.” I suspect this expression to be an anachronism; it is clearly post-Mahometan and from a Mahometan author. He has likewise quoted authorities for the persecution of Artaxerxes, which relate to those of his descendants.

(2) Sozomen, indeed, asserts that Christianity was first introduced into the Persian dominions at a later period, from their intercourse with

Osroene and Armenia. But it is very improbable that the active zeal of the Christians in the first ages of the religion should not have taken advantage of the mild and tolerant government of the Parthian kings. “Parthians and Elamites,” i. e. Jews inhabiting those countries, are mentioned as among the converts on the day of Pentecost. Sozomen, ii. 8.

(3) The date of the earliest Christian communities in India is judiciously discussed in Bohnen, *das alte Indien*, i. 369. to the end.

(4) Malcolm’s *Hist. of Persia*, i. 74., from Ferdusi.



severest oppressions ; the burial of the dead was peculiarly offensive to the usages of the fire-worshippers. Mani was alike rejected, and persecuted by the Christian and the Magian priesthood ; and the barbarous execution of the Christian bishops, who ruled over the Babylonian sees, demanded at a later period the interference of Constantine (1).

But while Persia thus fiercely repelled Christianity from its frontier, upon that frontier arose a Christian state (2). Armenia was the first country which embraced Christianity as the religion of the king, the nobles, and the people. During the early ages of the empire, Armenia had been an object of open contention, or of political intrigue, between the conflicting powers of Parthia and Rome. The adoption of Christianity as the religion of the state, while it united the interests of the kingdom, by a closer bond, with the Christian empire of Rome ( for it anticipated the honour of being the first Christian state by only a few years ), added, to its perilous situation on the borders of the two empires, a new cause for the implacable hostility of Persia. Every successful invasion, and every subtle negotiation to establish the Persian predominance in Armenia, was marked by the most relentless and sanguinary persecutions, which were endured with the combined dignity of Christian and patriotic heroism by the afflicted people. The Vartobed, or patriarch, was always the first victim of Persian conquest, the first leader to raise the fallen standard of independence.

Armenia  
the first  
Christian  
kingdom.

The Armenian histories, written, almost without exception, by the priesthood, in order to do honour to their native country by its early reception of Christianity, have included the Syrian kingdom of Edessa with its borders, and assigned a place to the celebrated Abgar in the line of their kings. The personal correspondence of Abgar with the divine author of Christianity is, of course, incorporated in this early legend. But though, no doubt, Christianity had made considerable progress, at the commencement of the third century, the government of Armenia was still sternly and irreconcilably Pagan. Khosrov I. imitated the cruel and impious Pharaoh. He compelled the Christians, on a scanty stipend, to labour on the public works. Many obtained the glorious crown of martyrdom (3).

A. D. 214

Gregory the Illuminator was the Apostle of Armenia. The birth of Gregory was darkly connected with the murder of the reigning king, the almost total extirpation of the royal race, and the subjugation of his country to a foreign yoke. He was the son of Anah, the assassin of his sovereign. The murder of Khosrov, the valiant

Gregory  
the Illumi-  
nator.

(1) Sozomen, ii. 9. 10. Compare, on those persecution of the Christians, Kleuker, *Anhang zum Zendavesta*, p. 292. et seq., with Assemani, *Act. Martyr. Or. et Occid.* Roma, 1748.

(2) St. Martin, *Mémoires sur l'Arménie*, i. 405,

406, etc. Notes to Le Beau., *Hist. des Empereurs*, i. 76.

(3) Father Chamich, *History of Armenia*, i. 153.. translated by Aëdall.

and powerful king of Armenia, is attributed to the jealous ambition of Ardeschir, the first King of Persia (1). Anah, of a noble Armenian race, was bribed by the promise of vast wealth and the second place in the empire, to conspire against the life of Khosrov. Pretending to take refuge in the Armenian dominions from the persecution of King Ardeschir, he was hospitably received in the city of Valarshapat. He struck the King to the heart, and fled.

Murder of  
Khosrov.

The Armenian soldiery, in their fury, pursued the assassin, who was drowned, during his flight, in the river Araxes. The vengeance of the soldiers wreaked itself upon his innocent family (2); the infant Gregory was alone saved by a Christian nurse, who took refuge in Cæsarea. There the future Apostle was baptized, and (thus runs the legend) by divine revelation received the name of Gregory. Ardeschir reaped all the advantage of the treachery of Anah, and Armenia sank into a Persian province. The conqueror consummated the crime of his base instrument; the whole family of Khosrov was put to death, except Tiridates, who fled to the Roman dominions, and one sister, Khosrovedught, who was afterwards instrumental in the introduction of Christianity into the kingdom. Tiridates served with distinction in the Roman armies of Dioclesian, and seized the favourable opportunity of reconquering his hereditary throne. The re-establishment of Armenia as a friendly power was an important event in the Eastern policy of Rome; the simultaneous conversion of the empire and its Eastern ally to the new religion strengthened the bonds of union by a common religious interest.

Tiridates,  
King of  
Armenia.

Gregory re-entered his native country in the train of the victorious Tiridates. But Tiridates was a bigoted adherent to the ancient religion of his country. This religion appears to have been a mingled form of corrupt Zoroastrianism and Grecian or rather Oriental, nature-worship, with some rites of Scythian origin. Their chief deity was Aramazt, the Ormuzd of the Magian system, but their temples were crowded with statues, and their altars reeked with animal sacrifices; usages revolting to the purer Magianism of Persia (3). The Babylonian impersonation of the female principle of generation, Anaitis or Anahid, was one of their most celebrated divinities; and at the funeral of their great King Artaces, many persons had immolated themselves, after the Scythian or Getic custom, upon his body.

Persecu-  
tion of  
Gregory.

It was in the temple of Anaitis, in the province of Ekelias, that Tiridates offered the sacrifice of thanksgiving for his restoration to his hereditary throne. He commanded Gregory to assist in the idolatrous worship. The Christian resolutely refused, and endured, according to the Armenian history, twelve different kinds of tor-

(1) Moses Choren, 64. 71. Chamich, Hist. Armén. i. 154., and other authorities. St. Martin, Mémoires sur l'Arménie, i. 303. etc.

(2) According to St. Martin, two children of Anah were saved.

(3) Chamich, i. 145.

ture. It was disclosed to the exasperated monarch, that the apostate from the national religion was son to the assassin of his father. Gregory was plunged into a deep dungeon, where he languished for fourteen years, supported by the faithful charity of a Christian female. At the close of the fourteen years, a pestilence, attributed by the Christian party to the divine vengeance, wasted the kingdom of Armenia. The virgin sister of Tiridates, Khosrovedught (the daughter of Khosrov) had embraced the faith of the Gospel. By divine revelation (thus speaks the piety of the priestly historians), she advised the immediate release of Gregory. What Heaven had commanded, Heaven had approved by wonders. The King himself, afflicted with the malady, was healed by the Christian missionary. The pestilence ceased; the king, the nobles, the people, almost simultaneously submitted to baptism. Armenia became at once a Christian kingdom. Gregory took the highest rank, as Archbishop of the kingdom. Priests were invited from Greece and Syria; four hundred bishops were consecrated; churches and religious houses arose in every quarter; the Christian festivals and days of religious observance were established by law.

Conversion of the King.

But the severe truth of history must make the melancholy acknowledgment that the Gospel did not finally triumph without a fierce and sanguinary strife. The province of Dara, the sacred region of the Armenians, crowded with their national temples, made a stern and determined resistance. The priests fought for their altars with desperate courage, and it was only with the sword that churches could be planted in that irreclaimable district. In the war waged by Maximin against Tiridates, in which the ultimate aim of the Roman Emperor, according to Eusebius, was the suppression of Christianity, he may have been invited and encouraged by the rebellious Paganism of the subjects of Tiridates (1).

Persecution by the Christians.

Towards the close of the third century, while the religion of the East was undergoing these signal revolutions, and the antagonist creeds of Magianism and Christianity were growing up into powerful and hostile systems, and assuming an important influence on the political affairs of Asia; while the East and the West thus began that strife of centuries which subsequently continued in a more fierce and implacable form in the conflict between Christianity and Mahometanism; a bold and ambitious adventurer in the career of

Manichæism.

Mani.

(1) In a very curious extract from the ancient Armenian historian Zenob, there is an account of this civil war. The following inscription commemorated the decisive battle:—

The first battle in which men bravely fought.  
The leader of the warriors was Argan, the chief of the Priesthood,  
Who lies here in his grave,  
And with him 1038 men,  
And this battle was fought for the godhead of Kisane,  
And for that of Christ.

This unquestionably was the first religious war since the introduction of Christianity. It is a singular fact, that these obstinate idolaters were

said to be of foreign, of Indian descent; they wore long hair. See *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vol. i. p. 258, 378 et seqq.



Various  
sources of  
his doc-  
trines.

religious change (1) attempted to unite the conflicting elements ; to reconcile the hostile genius of the East and of the West ; to fuse together, in one comprehensive scheme, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and apparently the Buddhism of India. It is singular to trace the doctrines of the most opposite systems, and of remote regions, assembled together and harmonised in the vast Eclecticism of Mani (2). From his native Persia he derived his Dualism, his antagonist worlds of light and darkness ; and from Magianism, likewise, his contempt of outward temple and splendid ceremonial. From Gnosticism, or rather from universal Orientalism, he drew the inseparable admixture of physical and moral notions, the eternal hostility between mind and matter, the rejection of Judaism, and the identification of the God of the Old Testament with the evil spirit, the distinction between Jesus and the Christ, with the docetism, or the unreal death of the incorporeal Christ. From Cabalism, through Gnosticism, came the primal man, the Adam Cædmon of that system, and (if that be a genuine part of this system) the assumption of beautiful human forms, those of graceful boys and attractive virgins, by the powers of light, and their union with the male and female spirits of darkness. From India, he took the Emanation theory (all light was a part of the Deity, and in one sense the soul of the world), the metempsychosis, the triple division of human souls (the one the pure, which reascended at once, and was reunited to the primal light ; the second the semi-pure, which having passed through a purgatorial process, returned to earth, to pass through a second ordeal of life ; the third, of obstinate and irreclaimable evil) : from India, perhaps, came his Homophorus, as the Greeks called it, his Atlas, who supported the earth upon his shoulders, and his Splenditenens, the circumambient air. From Chaldea, he borrowed the power of astral influences ; and he approximated to the solar worship of expiring Paganism : Christ, the Mediator, like the Mithra of his countrymen, had his dwelling in the sun (3).

From his native country Mani derived the simple diet of fruits and herbs ; from the Buddhism of India, his respect for animal life, which was neither to be slain for food or for sacrifice (4) ; from all

(1) Besides the original authorities, I have consulted for Mani and his doctrines, Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme* ; D'Herbelot, art. Mani ; Lardner, *Credibility of Gospel History* ; Mosheim, de Reb. Christ. and Const. Magnam ; Matter, *Hist. du Gnosticisme*, ii. 351. I have only seen Baur's *Manichäische Religions System*, since this chapter was written. I had anticipated, though not followed out so closely, the relationship to Buddhism, much of which, however, is evidently the common groundwork of all Orientalism.

(2) Augustine, in various passages, but most fully in what is given as an extract from the book of the Foundation, de Nat. Boni, p. 515. Compare Beausobre, vol. ii. 386., who seems to consider it an abstract from some forged or spurious work. Probably much of Mani's system

was allegorical, but how much his disciples probably did not, and his adversaries would not, know. See also the most curious passage about the Manichean metempsychosis, in the statement of Tyrbo, in the *Disputatio Archelai et Manetis*, apud Routh *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. iv.

(3) D'Herbelot, voc. Mani.

(4) D'Herbelot, voc. Mani. Augustine says that they wept when they plucked vegetables for food, for in them also there was a certain portion of life, which, according to him, was a part of the Deity. *Dicitis enim dolorem sentire fructum ; cum de arbore carpitur, sentire dum conciditur, cum teritur, cum coquitur, cum manditur. Cujus, porro dementia est, pios se videri velle, quod ab animalium interfertione se temperent, cum omnes suas escas eadem animas habere dicant*

the anti-materialist sects or religions, the abhorrence of all sensual indulgence, even the bath as well as the banquet; the proscription, or, at least, the disparagement of marriage. And the whole of these foreign and extraneous tenets, his creative imagination blended with his own form of Christianity; for, so completely are they mingled, that it is difficult to decide whether Christianity or Magianism formed the groundwork of his system. From Christianity he derived not, perhaps, a strictly Nicene, but more than an Arian, Trinity. His own system was the completion of the imperfect revelation of the Gospel. He was a *man* invested with a divine mission,—the Paraclete (for Mani appears to have distinguished between the Paraclete and the Holy Spirit), who was to consummate the great work auspiciously commenced, yet unfulfilled, by the mission of Jesus (1). Mani had twelve apostles. His Ertang, or Gospel, was intended to supersede the four Christian Evangelists, whose works, though valuable, he averred had been interpolated with many Jewish fables. The Acts, Mani altogether rejected, as announcing the descent of the Paraclete on the Apostles (2). On the writings of St. Paul, he pronounced a more favourable sentence. But his Ertang, it is said, was not merely the work of a prophet, but of a painter; for, among his various accomplishments, Mani excelled in that art. It was richly illustrated by paintings, which commanded the wonder of the age; while his followers, in devout admiration, studied the tenets of their master in the splendid images, as well as in the sublime language, of the Marvellous Book. If this be true, since the speculative character of Mani's chief tenets, their theogonical, if it may be so said, extramundane character, lay beyond the proper province of the painter (the imitation of existing beings, and that idealism which, though elevating its objects to an unreal dignity or beauty, is nevertheless faithful to the truth of nature) this imagery, with which his book was illuminated, was probably a rich system of Oriental symbolism, which may have been transmuted by the blind zeal of his followers, or the misapprehension of his adversaries, into some of his more fanciful tenets. The religion of Persia was fertile in these emblematic figures, if not their native source; and in the gorgeous illuminated manuscripts of the East, often full of allegorical devices, we may discover, perhaps, the antitypes of the Ertang of Mani (3).

His paintings.

quibus ut putant, viventibus, tanta vulnera et manibus et dentibus ingerant. Augustin, contra Faust., lib. vi. p. 205, 206. This is pure Buddhism.

(1) Lardner, following Beausobre, considers the account of Mani's predecessors, Scythianus and Terebinthus, or Buddha, idle fictions. The virgin birth assigned to Buddha, which appears to harmonise with the great Indian Mythos of the origin of Buddhism, might warrant a conjecture that this is an Oriental tradition of the Indian origin of some of Mani's doctrines, dic-

tated by Greek ignorance. I now find this conjecture followed out and illustrated with copious learning by Banr.

(2) Lardner (v. 11. 183.) suggests other reasons for the rejection of the Acts.

(3) It appears, I think, from Augustine, that all the splendid images of the sceptred king crowned with flowers, the Splenditenens and the Homophorus, were allegorically interpreted. Si non sunt ænigmata rationis, phantasmata sunt cogitationis, aut vecordia furoris. Si vero ænigmata esse dicuntur. Contra Faust. xv. p. 277.

Life of  
Mani.

Mani (we blend together and harmonise as far as possible the conflicting accounts of the Greeks and Asiatics) was of Persian birth (1), of the sacred race of the Magi. He wore the dress of a Persian of distinction: the lofty Babylonian sandals, the mantle of azure blue, the parti-coloured trowsers, and the ebony staff in his hand (2). He was a proficient in the learning of his age and country, a mathematician, and had made a globe; he was deeply skilled, as appears from his system, in the theogonical mysteries of the East, and so well versed in the Christian Scriptures, as to be said, and indeed he may at one time have been a Christian priest in the province of Achoriaz, that bordered on Babylonia (3). He began to propagate his doctrines during the reign of Shah-poor, but the son of Ardisheer would endure no invasion upon the established Magianism (4). Mani fled from the wrath of his sovereign into Turkestan; from thence he is said to have visited India, and even China (5). In Turkestan, he withdrew himself from the society of men, like Mahomet in the cave of Hera (6), into a grotto, through which flowed a fountain of water, and in which provision for a year had been secretly stored. His followers believed that he had ascended into heaven, to commune with the Deity. At the end of the year, he reappeared, and displayed his Ertang, embellished with its paintings, as the divine revelation (7).

In the theory of Mani, the one Supreme, who hovered in inaccessible and uninfluential distance over the whole of the Gnostic systems, the Brahm of the Indians, and the more vague and abstract Zeruane Akerene of Zoroastrianism, holds no place. The groundwork of his system is an original and irreconcilable Dualism (8). The two antagonist worlds of light and darkness, of spirit and matter, existed from eternity, separate, unmingled, unapproaching, ignorant of each other's existence (9). The kingdom of light was

The extract from the "amatory song" (contra Faust. xv. 5.), with the twelve ages (the great cycle of 12,000 years) singing and casting flowers upon the everlasting sceptred king; the twelve gods (the signs of the zodiac), and the hosts of angels, is evidently the poetry, not the theology, of the system.

(1) His birth is assigned by the Chronicle of Edessa to the year 239. Beausobre, i.

(2) Beausobre, who is inclined to admit the genuineness of this description, in the Acts of Archelaus, has taken pains to show that there was nothing differing from the ordinary Persian dress. Vol. i. p. 97 etc.

(3) In the Acts of Archelaus he is called a barbarous Persian, who understood no Greek, hut disputed in Syriac, c. 36.

(4) Malcolm, i. 79.

(5) Abulpharag, Dynast. p. 82. See Lardner, p. 167.

(6) Lardner considers the story of the cave a later invention borrowed from Mahomet. The relation of this circumstance by Mahometan authors leads me to the opposite conclusion. They would rather have avoided than invented points of similitude between their prophet and "the

impious Sadducee," as he is called in the Koran. But see Baur's very ingenious and probable theory, which resolves it into a myth, and connects it with the Mithriac and still earlier astronomical or religious legends.

(7) Beausobre (i. 191, 192.) would find the Cascar at which, according to the extant, but much contested report, the memorable conference between Archelaus and Mani was held, at Cashgar in Turkestan. But independent of the improbability of a Christian bishop settled in Turkestan, the whole history is full of difficulties, and nothing is less likely than that the report of such a conference should reach the Greek or Syrian Christians through the hostile territory of Persia.

(8) Epiphanius gives these words as the commencement of Mani's work (in twenty-two books) on the Mysteries. Ἦν Θεὸς καὶ ὕλη, φῶς καὶ σκότος, ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακόν, τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀκρὸς ἐναντία, ὡς κατὰ μὲν ἐπικρινοῦν δ' αὐτοῦ σατίρα. Epiphani. Hæret. lxxi. 14.

(9) Hæ quidem in exordio fuerant duæ substantiæ a se diversæ. Et luminis quidem in-



held by God the Father, who “rejoiced in his own proper eternity, and comprehended in himself wisdom and vitality:” his most glorious kingdom was founded in a light and blessed region, which could not be moved or shaken. On one side of his most illustrious and holy territory was the land of darkness, of vast depth and extent, inhabited by fiery bodies, and pestiferous races of beings (1). Civil dissensions agitated the world of darkness; the defeated faction fled to the heights or to the extreme verge of their world (2). They beheld with amazement, and with envy, the beautiful and peaceful regions of light (3). They determined to invade the delightful realm; and the primal man, the archetypal Adam, was formed to defend the borders against this irruption of the hostile powers. He was armed with his five elements, opposed to those which formed the realm of darkness. The primal man was in danger of discomfiture in the long and fearful strife, had not Oromazd, the great power of the world of light, sent the living Spirit to his assistance. The powers of darkness retreated; but they bore away some particles of the divine light, and the extrication of these particles (portions of the Deity, according to the subtle materialism of the system) is the object of the long and almost interminable strife of the two principles (4). Thus, part of the Divinity was interfused through the whole of matter; light was, throughout all visible existence, commingled with darkness (5). Mankind was the creation or the offspring of the great principle of darkness, after this stolen and ethereal light had become incorporated with his dark and material being. Man was formed in the image of the primal Adam; his nature was threefold, or perhaps dualistic; the body, the concupiscent or sensual soul (which may have been the influence of the body on the soul), and the pure, celestial, and intellectual spirit. Eve was of inferior, of darker, and more material origin;

perium tenebat Deus Pater, in suâ sanctâ stirpe perpetuus, in virtute magnificus, naturâ ipsâ verus, æternitate propriâ semper exultans, continens apud se sapientiam et sensus vitales\*\*\* Ita autem fundata sunt ejusdem splendidissima regna super lucidam et beatam terram, ut a nullo unquam aut moveri aut concuti possint. Apud Augustin. contra Ep. Manich. c. 13. n. 16.

(1) The realm of darkness was divided into five distinct circles, which may remind us of Dante's hell. 1. Of infinite darkness, perpetually emanating, and of inconceivable stench. 2. Beyond these, that of muddy and turbid waters, with their inhabitants; and 3. within, that of fierce and boisterous winds, with their prince and their parents. 4. A fiery but corruptible region (the region of destroying fire), with its leaders and nations. 5. In like manner, further within, a place full of smoke and thick gloom, in which dwelt the dreadful sovereign of the whole, with innumerable princes around him, of whom he was the soul and the source. Ep. Fundament. apud Augustin. contra Manich. c. 14. n. 19.

(2) The world of darkness, according to one statement, cleft the world of light like a wedge (Augustin. contr. Faust. iv. 2.); according to

another (Titus Bostrensis, i. 7.) it occupied the southern quarter of the universe. This, as Baur observes, is Zoroastrianism. Bundehesch, part. iii. p. 62.

(3) Theodoret, Hæret. Fab. i. 26.

(4) Epiphau. Hæret. lxvi. 76. Titus Bostrensis, Augustin. de Hæret. c. 46.

(5) The celestial powers, during the long process of commixture, assumed alternately the most beautiful forms of the masculine and feminine sex, and mingled with the powers of darkness, who likewise became boys and virgins; and from their conjunction proceeded the still commingling world. This is probably an allegory, perhaps a painting. There is another fanciful poetic image of considerable beauty, and, possibly, of the same allegoric character. The pure elementary spirits soared upwards in “their ships of light,” in which they originally sailed through the stainless element, those which were of a hotter nature were dragged down to earth; those of a colder and more humid temperament were exhaled upwards to the elemental waters. The ships of light are, in another view, the celestial bodies.

for the creating Archon, or spirit of evil, had expended all the light, or soul, upon man. Her beauty was the fatal tree of Paradise, for which Adam was content to fall. It was by this union, that the sensual or concupiscent soul triumphed over the pure and divine spirit (1); and it is by marriage, by sexual union, that the darkening race was propagated. The intermediate, the visible world, which became the habitation of man, was the creation of the principle of good, by his spirit. This primal principle subsisted in trinal unity (whether from eternity might, perhaps, have been as fiercely agitated in the Manichean as in the Christian schools); the Christ, the first efflux of the God of Light, would have been defined by the Manichean as in the Nicene creed, as Light of Light; he was self-subsistent, endowed with all the perfect attributes of the Deity, and his dwelling was in the sun (2). He was the Mithra of the Persian system; and the Manichean doctrine was Zoroastrianism under Christian appellations (3). There is an evident difference between the Jesus and the Christos throughout the system; the Jesus Patibilis seems to be the imprisoned and suffering light.

The Spirit, which made up the triple being of the primal principle of good, was an all pervading æther, the source of life and being; which continually stimulating the disseminated particles of light, was the animating principle of the worlds. He was the creator of the intermediate world, the scene of strife, in which the powers of light and darkness contested the dominion over man; the one assisting the triumph of the particle of light which formed the intellectual spirit, the other embruting and darkening the imprisoned light with the corruption and sensual pollutions of matter. But the powers of darkness obtained the mastery, and man was rapidly degenerating into the baser destiny; the Homophorus, the Atlas on whose shoulders the earth rests, began to tremble and totter under his increasing burden (4). Then the Christ descended from his dwelling in the sun; assumed a form *apparently* human; the Jews incited by the prince of darkness, crucified his phantom form; but

(1) De Mor. Manichæor. c. 19. Acta Archelai, c. 10.

(2) According to the creed of Faustus, his *virtue* dwelt in the sun, his *wisdom* in the moon. Apud August. lib. xxx. p. 333.

(3) The Manicheans were Trinitarians, or at least used Trinitarian language. Augustin contra Faust. c. xx. Nos Patris quidem Dei omnipotentis, et Christi filii ejus, et Spiritus Sancti unum idemque sub triplici appellatione colimus nomen; sed Patrem quidem ipsum lucem incolere summam ac principalem, quam Paulus alias inaccessibleem vocat; Filium vero in hac secundâ ac visibili luce consistere, qui quoniam sit et ipse geminus, ut eum Apostolus novit, Christum dicens esse Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam, virtutem quidem ejus in sole habitare credimus, sapientiam vero in lunâ: nec non et Spiritus Sancti, qui est majestas tertia, aeris hanc omnem ambitum sedem fatemur ac diversorium, cujus

ex viribus ac spiritali profusione terram quoque concipientem, gignere patibilem Jesum, qui est vita et salus hominum, qui suspensus ex ligno.

(4) Homophorus and his ally, the Splendite-nens, who assists him in maintaining the earth in its equilibrium, is one of the most incongruous and least necessary parts of the Manichean system.

Is the origin of these images the notion of supporters of the earth which are so common in the East? Are any of these fables older than the introduction of Manicheism? Is it the old Indian fable under another form? or is it the Greek Atlas? I am inclined to look to India for the origin.

Beausobre's objection, that such a fiction is inconsistent with Mani's mathematical knowledge, and his formation of a globe, is of no inconsiderable weight, if it is not mere poetry.

he left behind his Gospel, which dimly and imperfectly taught, what was now revealed in all its full effulgence by Mani the Persian.

The celestial bodies, which had been formed by the living spirit of the purer element, were the witnesses and co-operators in the great strife (1). To the sun, the dwelling of the Christ, were drawn up the purified souls, in which the principle of light had prevailed, and passed onward for ablution in the pure water, which forms the moon; and then, after fifteen days, returned to the source of light in the sun. The spirits of evil, on the creation of the visible world, lest they should fly away, and bear off into irrecoverable darkness the light which was still floating about, had been seized by the living spirit, and bound to the stars. Hence the malignant influences of the constellations; hence all the terrific and destructive fury of the elements. While the soft and refreshing and fertilising showers are the distillation of the celestial spirit, the thunders are the roarings, the lightning the flashing wrath, the hurricane the furious breath, the torrent and destructive rains the sweat, of the Dæmon of darkness. This wrath is peculiarly excited by the extrication of the passive Jesus, who was said to have been begotten upon the all-conceiving earth, from his power, by the pure Spirit. The passive Jesus is an emblem, in one sense, it should seem, or type of mankind; more properly, in another, of the imprisoned deity or light. For gradually the souls of men were drawn upwards to the purifying sun; they passed through the twelve signs of the zodiac to the moon, whose waxing and waning was the reception and transmission of light to the sun, and from the sun to the Fountain of Light. Those which were less pure passed again through different bodies, gradually became defæcated, during this long metempsychosis: and there only remained a few obstinately and inveterately embruted in darkness, whom the final consummation of the visible world would leave in the irreclaimable society of the evil powers. At that consummation, the Homophorus would shake off his load; the world would be dissolved in fire (2); the powers of darkness cast back for all eternity to their primæval state; the condemned souls would be kneaded up for ever in impenetrable matter, while the purified souls, in martial hosts, would surround the frontier of the region of light, and for ever prohibit any new irruption from the antagonist world of darkness.

The worship of the Manicheans was simple: they built no altar,

(1) Lardner has well expressed the Manichean notion of the formation of the celestial bodies, which were made, the sun of the *good fire*, the moon of the *good water*. "In a word, not to be too minute, the Creator formed the sun and moon out of those parts of the light which had preserved their original purity. The visible or inferior heavens (for now we do not speak of the

supreme heaven) and the rest of the planets were formed of those parts of light which were but little corrupted with matter. The rest he left in our world, which are no other than those parts of light which had suffered most by the contagion of matter." Lardner's Works, 4to. ed. ii. 193.

(2) *Acta Disput.* ch. ii. Epiphan. c. 58.



they raised no temple, they had no images, they had no imposing ceremonial. Pure and simple prayer was their only form of adoration (1); they did not celebrate the birth of Christ, for of his birth they denied the reality; their paschal feast, as they equally disbelieved the reality of Christ's passion, though kept holy, had little of the Christian form. Prayers addressed to the sun, or at least with their faces directed to that tabernacle in which Christ dwelt; hymns to the great principle of light; exhortations to subdue the dark and sensual element within, and the study of the marvellous book of Mani, constituted their devotion. They observed the Lord's day; they administered baptism, probably with oil; for they seem (though this point is obscure) to have rejected water-baptism; they celebrated the Eucharist; but as they abstained altogether from wine, they probably used pure water or water mingled with raisins (2). Their manners were austere, and ascetic; they tolerated, but only tolerated marriage, and that only among the inferior orders (3): the theatre, the banquet, even the bath, were severely proscribed. Their diet was of fruits and herbs; they shrunk with abhorrence from animal food; and with Buddhist nicety, would tremble at the guilt of having extinguished the principle of life, the spark, as it were, of celestial light, in the meanest creature. This involved them in the strangest absurdities and contradictions, which are pressed against them by their antagonists with unrelenting logic (4). They admitted penitence for sin, and laid the fault of their delinquencies on the overpowering influence of matter (5). Mani suf-

(1) Faustus expresses this sentiment very finely. Item Pagani aris, delubris, simulacris, atque incenso Deum colendum putant. Ego ab his in hoc quoque multum diversus incedo, qui ipsum me, si modo sim dignus, rationabile Dei templum puto. Vivum vivæ majestatis simulacrum Christum filium ejus accipio; aram, mentem puris artibus et disciplinis imbutum. Honores quoque divinos ac sacrificia in solis orationibus, et ipsis puris et simplicibus pono. Faust. apud August. xx. 3.

They bitterly taunted the Catholics with their Paganism, their sacrifices, their agapæ, their idols, their martyrs, their Gentile holidays and rites. *Ibid.*

(2) August. contra Faust. Disput. i. 2, 3.

(3) St. Augustine accuses them of breaking the fifth commandment. Tu autem doctrinâ demoniacâ didicisti inimicos deputare parentes tuos, quod te per concubitum in carne ligaverint, et hoc modo utique deo tuo immundas compedes imposuerint. Adv. Faust. lib. xv. p. 278. Opinantur et prædicant diabolum fecisse atque junxisse masculam et feminam. Idem, lib. xix. p. 331. Dispicit "crescite et multiplicamini," ne Dei vestra multiplicentur ergastula, etc. Adv. Secundum, c. 21.

Ἀτίχισταί γάμων καὶ ἀρροδισίων καὶ τεκνοποιίας, ἵνα μὴ ἐπιπλεῖον ἡ δύναμις ἐνοικήσῃ τῇ ὕλῃ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ γένους διαδοχὴν. Alexand. Lycop. c. 4.

They asserted, indeed, that their doctrines went no farther in this respect than those of the Catholic Christians. Faustus, 30. c. 4. Their

opposition to marriage is assigned as among the causes of the enmity of the Persian king. Rex vero Persarum, cum vidisset tam Catholicos et Episcopos, quam Manichæos Manetis seetarios, a nuptiis abstinere; in Manichæos quidem sententiam mortis tulit. Ad Christianos vero idem edictum manavit. Quum igitur Christiani ad regem confugissent, jussit ille discrimen quale inter utrosque esset, sibi exponi. Apud Asseman, Biblioth. Orient. vii. 220.

There were, however, very different rules of diet and of manners for the elect and the auditors, much resembling those of the monks and other Christians among the Catholics. See quotations in Lardner, ii. 156.

(4) St. Augustine's Treatise de Mor. Manichæor. is full of these extraordinary charges. In the Confessions (iii. 10.), he says that the fig wept when it was plucked, and the parent tree poured forth tears of milk; "that particles of the true and Supreme God were imprisoned in an apple, and could not be set free but by the touch of one of the elect. If eaten, therefore, by one not a Manichean, it was a deadly sin; and hence they are charged with making it a sin to give any thing which had life to a poor man not a Manichean." "They showed more compassion to the fruits of the earth than to human beings." They abhorred husbandry, it is said, as continually wounding life, even in clearing a field of thorns; "so much more were they friends of gourds than of men."

(5) An acknowledgment of the blamelessness of their manners is extorted from St. Augustine; at least he admits that, as far as his knowledge as

ferred the fate of all who attempt to reconcile conflicting parties without power to enforce harmony between them. He was disclaimed and rejected with every mark of indignation and abhorrence by both. On his return from exile (1), indeed, he was received with respect and favour by the reigning sovereign, Hormouz, the son of Shahpoor, who bestowed upon him a castle named Arabion. In this point alone the Greek and Oriental accounts coincide. It was from his own castle that Mani attempted to propagate his doctrines among the Christians in the province of Babylonia. The fame of Marcellus, a noble Christian soldier, for his charitable acts in the redemption of hundreds of captives, designated him as a convert who might be of invaluable service to the cause of Manicheism. According to the Christian account, Mani experienced a signal discomfiture in his conference with Archelaus, bishop of Cascar (2). But his dispute with the Magian Hierarchy had a more fearful termination. It was an artifice of the new king Baharam to tempt the dangerous teacher from his castle. He was seized, flayed alive, and his skin, stuffed with straw, placed over the gate of the city Shahpoor.

Death of  
Mani.

But wild as may appear his doctrines, they expired not with their author. The anniversary of his death was hallowed by his mourning disciples (3). The sect was organized upon the Christian model: he left his twelve apostles, his seventy-two bishops (4), his priesthood. His distinction between the Elect (5) or the Perfect, and the Hearers or Catechumens, offered an exact image of the orthodox Christian communities; and the latter were permitted to marry, to eat animal food, and cultivate the earth (6). In the East and in the West the doctrines spread with the utmost rapidity; and the deep impression which they made upon the mind of man, may be estimated by Manicheism having become almost throughout Asia and Europe, a by-word of religious animosity. In the Mahometan world the tenets of the Sadducean, the impious Mani, are branded as the worst and most awful impiety. In the West the

Propaga-  
tion of his  
religion.

a hearer, he can charge them with no immorality. Contr. Fortunat. in init. In other parts of his writings, especially in the tract de Morib. Manichæor, he is more unfavourable. But see the remarkable passage, contra Faust. v. i., in which the Manichean contrasts his works with the faith of the orthodox Christian.

(1) According to Malcolum he did not return till the reign of Baharam.

(2) Some of the objections of Beausobre to this conference appear insuperable. Allow a city named Cascar; can we credit the choice of Greek, even Heathen, rhetoricians and grammarians as assessors in such a city and in such a contest? Archelaus, it must indeed be confessed, plays the sophist; and if Mani had been no more powerful as a reasoner, or as a speaker, he would hardly have distracted the East and West with his doctrines. It is not improbably an imaginary dialogue in the form, though certainly not in the style, of Plato. See

the best edition of it, in Routh's Reliquiæ Sacræ.

(3) Augustin contr. Epist. Manichæi, c. 9. The day of Mani's death was kept holy by his followers, because he *really* died; the crucifixion neglected, because Christ had but *seemingly* expired on the cross.

(4) Augustin, de Hæres, c. 46.

(5) The strangest notion was, that vegetables used for food were purified; that is, the divine principle of life and light separated from the material and impure, by passing through the bodies of the Elect. Præbent alimenta electis suis, ut divina illa substantia alimenta electis purgata, impetret eis veniam, quorum ventris oblatione purganda. Augustin, de Hæres, c. 46. It was a merit in the hearers to make these offerings. Compare Confess. iv. 1.

(6) Auditores, qui appellantur apud eos, et carnis vescuntur, et agros colunt, et si voluerint, uxores habent, quorum nihil faciunt qui vocantur Electi. Augustin. Epist. cccxxvii.

progress of the believers in this most dangerous of Heresiarchs was so successful, that the followers of Mani were condemned to the flames or to the mines, and the property of those who introduced the " execrable usages and foolish laws of the Persians " into the peaceful empire of Rome, confiscated to the imperial treasury. One of the edicts of Dioclesian was aimed at their suppression (1). St. Augustine himself (2) with difficulty escaped the trammels of their creed, to become their most able antagonist; and in every century of Christianity, Manicheism, when its real nature was as much unknown as the Copernican system, was a proverb of reproach against all sectaries who departed from the unity of the Church.

The extent of its success may be calculated by the implacable hostility of all other religions to the doctrines of Mani : the causes of that success are more difficult to conjecture. Manicheism would rally under its banner the scattered followers of the Gnostic sects : but Gnosticism was never, it should seem, popular; while Manicheism seems to have had the power of exciting a fanatic attachment to its tenets in the lower orders. The severe asceticism of their manners may have produced some effect; but in this respect they could not greatly have outdone monastic Christianity; and the distinct and definite impersonations of their creed, always acceptable to a rude and imaginative class, were encountered by formidable rivals in the dæmonology, and more complicated form of worship, which was rapidly growing up among the Catholics (3).

In the Eastern division of the Roman empire, Christianity had obtained a signal victory. It had subdued by patient endurance the violent hostility of Galerius; it had equally defied the insidious policy of Maximin; it had twice engaged in a contest with the civil government, and twice come forth in triumph. The edict of toleration had been extorted from the dying Galerius; and the Pagan Hierarchy, and more splendid Pagan ceremonial, with which Maximin attempted to raise up a rival power, fell to the ground on his defeat by Licinius, which closely followed that of Maxentius by Constantine. The Christian communities had publicly reassembled; the churches were rising in statelier form in all the cities;

(1) See the edict in Routh, iv. p. 285. Some doubt has been thrown on its authenticity. It is questioned by S. Basnage and by Lardner, though admitted by Beausobre. I cannot think the ignorance which it betrays of the " true principles of the Manichees," the argument adduced by Lardner, as of the least weight. Dioclesian's predecessors were as little acquainted with the " true principles of Christianity," yet condemned them in their public proceedings.

(2) There is something very beautiful in the language of St. Augustine, and at the same time nothing can show more clearly the strong hold which Manicheism had obtained on the Christian world. *Illi in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt cum quo labore verum inveniantur, et quam difficile caveantur errores. Illi in vos sæviant qui nesciunt quam rarum et arduum sit carnalia phan-*

*tasmata pie mentis serenitate superare. \*\*\*\* Illi in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt quibus suspiriis et gemitibus fiat, ut ex quantalacunque parte possit intelligi Deus. Postremo illi in vos sæviant, qui nunquam tali errore decepti sint, quali vos deceptos vident. Contr. Epist. Manichæi, c. 2. But the spirit of controversy was too strong for the charity and justice of Augustine. The tract which appears to me to give the fairest view of the real controversy, is the Disputatio contra Fortunatum.*

(3) The Manicheans were legally condemned under Valentinian and Valens. The houses in which they held their meetings were confiscated to the state (Cod. Theodos. xvi. 3.). By Theodosius, they were declared infamous, and incapable of inheriting by law, xvi. 17.



the bishops had reassumed their authority over their scattered but undiminished flocks. Though, in the one case, indignant animosity, and the desire of vindicating the severity of their measures against a sect dangerous for its numbers as well as its principles, in the other the glowing zeal of the martyr may be suspected of some exaggeration, yet when a public imperial edict, and the declarations of the Christians themselves, assert the numerical predominance of the Christian party, it is impossible to doubt that their numbers, as well as their activity, were imposing and formidable. In a rescript of Maximin he states, that it had been forced on the observation of his august fathers, Dioclesian and Maximian, that almost all mankind had abandoned the worship of their ancestors, and united themselves to the Christian sect (1); and Lucianus, a presbyter of Antioch, who suffered martyrdom under Maximin, asserts in his last speech that the greater part of the world had rendered its allegiance to Christianity; entire cities, and even the rude inhabitants of country districts (2). These statements refer more particularly to the East; and in the East various reasons would lead to the supposition, that the Christians bore a larger proportion to the rest of the population than in the other parts of the empire, except perhaps in Africa. The East was the native country of the new religion; the substratum of Judaism, on which it rested, was broader; and Judaism had extended its own conquests much farther by proselytism, and had thus prepared the way for Christianity. In Egypt and in the Asiatic provinces all the early modifications of Christian opinions, the Gnostic sects of all descriptions, had arisen; showing, as it were, by their fertility, the exuberance of religious life, and the congeniality of the soil to their prolific vegetation. The constitution of society was, in some respects, more favourable than in Italy to the development of the new religion. But it may be questioned whether the Western provinces did not at last offer the most open field for its free and undisputed course. In the East, the civilisation was Greek, or, in the remoter regions, Asiatic. The Romans assumed the sovereignty, and the highest offices of

Numbers  
of the  
Christians.

Different  
state of the  
East with  
regard to  
the propa-  
gation of  
Christi-  
anity.

(1) Σχεδὸν ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους, καταλειθεισας της τῶν θεῶν θρησκείας, τῷ ἔθνεϊ τῶν Χριστιανῶν συμμεμιχότας. Apud Euseb. Ec. Hist. ix. 9.

(2) Pars pæne mundi jam major hac veritate adstipulatur; urbes integre; aut si in his aliquid suspertum videatur, testatur de his etiam agrestis manus, ignara figmenti. This speech, it is true, is only contained in the Latin translation of Eusebius by Rufinus. But there is a calm character in its tone, which avouches its authenticity. The high authority of Porson and Dr. Routh require the addition of the following note. "Præstitisse aliis multitudine his quoque temporibus Christianos, scriptum extat apud Porphyrium, qui eos alicubi nominavit τοὺς πλείους; ut me olim fecit certiore eruditissimus

Porsonus." Routh, Reliquiæ Sacrae, iii. 193. Gibbon has attempted to form a calculation of the relative numbers of the Christians (see ch. xv. vol. ii. p. 363. with my note); he is, perhaps, inclined to underrate the proportion which they bore to the Heathens. Yet, notwithstanding the quotations above, and the high authority of Porson and of Routh, I should venture to doubt their being the majority, except, possibly, in a few Eastern cities. In fact, in a population so fluctuating as that of the empire at this time, any accurate calculation would have been nearly impossible. M. Beugnot agrees very much with Gibbon; and, I should conceive, with regard to the West, is clearly right, though I shall allege presently some reasons for the rapid progress of Christianity in the West of Europe.

the government were long held by men of Italian birth. Some of the richer patricians possessed extensive estates in the different provinces, but below this the native population retained its own habits and usages. Unless in the mercantile towns, which were crowded with foreign settlers from all quarters, who brought their manners, their customs, and their deities, the whole society was Greek, Syrian, or Egyptian. Above all, there was a native religion; and however this loose confederacy of religious republics, of independent colleges, or fraternities of the local or the national priesthoods, might only be held together by the bond of common hostility to the new faith, yet every where this religion was ancient, established, conformed to the habits of the people, endeared by local vanity, strengthened by its connection with municipal privileges, recognised by the homage, and sanctioned by the worship of the civil authorities. The Roman prefect, or proconsul, considered every form of Paganism as sufficiently identified with that of Rome, to demand his respect and support: every where he found deities with the same names or attributes as those of the imperial city; and every where, therefore, there was an alliance, seemingly close and intimate, between the local religion and the civil government.

Of the  
West,

In the Western provinces, Gaul, Spain, and Britain, but more particularly in Gaul, the constitution of society was very different. It was Roman, formed by the influx of colonists from different quarters, and the gradual adoption of Roman manners by the natives. It had grown up on the wane of Paganism. There was no old or established or national religion. The ancient Druidism had been proscribed as a dark and inhuman superstition, or had gradually worn away before the progress of Roman civilisation. Out of Italy, the gods of Italy were, to a certain degree, strangers: the Romans, as a nation, built no temples in their conquered provinces: the munificence of an individual, sometimes, perhaps, of the reigning Cæsar, after having laid down the military road, built the aqueduct, or encircled the vast arena of the amphitheatre, might raise a fane to his own tutelary divinity (1). Of the foreign settlers, each brought his worship; each set up his gods; vestiges of every kind of religion, Greek, Asiatic, Mithriac, have been discovered in Gaul, but none was dominant or exclusive. This state of society would require or welcome, or at all events offer less resistance to the propagation of a new faith. After it had once passed the Alps (2); Christianity made rapid progress; and the father of Constantine may have been guided no less by policy than humanity, in his reluctant and merciful execution of the persecuting edicts of Dioclesian and Galerius.

(1) Eumenius, in his panegyric on Constantine, mentions two temples of Apollo; of one, "the most beautiful in the world," the site is unknown: it is supposed to have been at Lyons

or Vienne; the other was at Autun. Eumen. Paneg. xxi., with the note of Cellarius.

(2) *Serius trans alpes, religione Dei suscepta?* Sulpec. Sever. H. E. lib. ii.

Such was the position of Christianity when Constantine commenced his struggle for universal empire : in the East, though rejected by the ancient rival of Rome, the kingdom of Persia, it was acknowledged as the religion of the state by a neighbouring nation ; in the Roman provinces, it was emerging victorious from a period of the darkest trial ; and though still threatened by the hostility of Maximin, that hostility was constrained to wear an artful disguise ; and when it ventured to assume a more open form, was obliged to listen, at least with feigned respect, to the remonstrances of the victorious Constantine. In the North, at least in that part from which Constantine derived his main strength, it was respected and openly favoured by the government. Another striking circumstance might influence the least superstitious mind, and is stated by the ecclesiastical historian, not to have been without effect on Constantine himself. Of all the Emperors who had been invested with the purple, either as Augusti or Cæsars, during the persecution of the Christians, his father alone, the protector of Christianity, had gone down to an honoured and peaceful grave (1). Dioclesian, indeed, still lived, but in what, no doubt, appeared to most of his former subjects, an inglorious retirement. However the philosophy of the abdicated emperor might teach him to show the vegetables of his garden, as worthy of as much interest to a mind of real dignity as the distinctions of worldly honour : however he may have been solicited by a falling and desperate faction to resume the purple, his abdication was no doubt, in general, attributed to causes less dignified than the contempt of earthly grandeur. Conscious derangement of mind (a malady inseparably connected, according to the religious notions of Jew, Pagan, probably of Christian, during that age, with the divine displeasure), or remorse of conscience, was reported to embitter the calm decline of Dioclesian's life. Instead of an object of envy, no doubt, in the general sentiment of mankind, he was thought to merit only aversion or contempt. Maximian (Herculius), the colleague of Dioclesian, after resuming the purple, engaging in base intrigues, or open warfare, against his son Maxentius, and afterwards against his protector Constantine, had anticipated the sentence of the executioner. Severus had been made prisoner, and forced to open his own veins. Galerius, the chief author of the persecution, had experienced the most miserable fate ; he had wasted away with a slow and agonizing and loathsome disease. Maximin alone remained, hereafter to

End of the  
persecu-  
tors of  
Christi-  
anity.

(1) Euseb. Vit. Const. i. 21.; Socrat. Eccles. Hist. i. 11. The language of the Ecclesiastical Historian Socrates is remarkable. Constantine, he says, was meditating the liberation of the empire from its tyrants : καὶ ὡς ἦν ἐν τιλικαύτῃ φροντίδι, ἐπανοεῖ τινα θεὸν ἐπικουρὸν πρὸς τὴν μάχην καλέσειε, κατὰ τοῦν δὲ ἐλάμβανεν, ὡς οὐδὲν ἀνάντο οἱ

περὶ Διοκλητιανόν, περὶ τοὺς Ἕλληνας θεοὺς διακείμενον. νῦρσκέν τε ὡς ὁ αὐτοῦ πατὴρ, Κονσταντίνος, ἀποστραφεὶς τὰς Ἕλληνας θρησκείας, εὐδαιμονέστερον τὸν βίον διήγαγεν. It was in this mood of mind that he saw the vision of the cross. Socrat. Eccles. Hist. i. 2.



perish in miserable obscurity. Nor should it be forgotten, that the great persecutor of the Christians had been the jealous tyrant of Constantine's youth. Constantine had preserved his liberty, perhaps his life, only by the boldness and rapidity of his flight from the court of Galerius (1).

War of  
Constantine  
against  
Maxen-  
tius.

A. D. 312.

Under all these circumstances, Constantine was advancing against Rome. The battle of Verona had decided the fate of the empire : the vast forces of Maxentius had melted away before the sovereign of Gaul : but the capital was still held with the obstinacy of despair by the voluptuous tyrant Maxentius. Constantine appeared on the banks of the Tiber, though invested with the Roman purple, yet a foreign conqueror. Many of his troops were barbarians, Kelts, Germans, Britons ; yet, in all probability, there were many of the Gaulish Christians in his army. Maxentius threw himself upon the gods, as well as upon the people of Rome : he attempted with desperate earnestness to rally the energy of Roman valour under the awfulness of the Roman religion.

Religion  
of Maxen-  
tius.

During the early part of his reign, Maxentius, intent upon his pleasures, had treated the religious divisions of Rome with careless indifference, or had endeavoured to conciliate the Christian party by conniving at their security. The deification of Galerius had been, as it were, an advance to the side of Paganism. The rebellion of Africa, which he revenged by the devastation of Carthage, was likely to bring him into hostile contact with the numerous Christians of that province. In Rome itself an event had occurred, which, however darkly described, was connected with the antagonist religious parties in the capital. A fire had broken out in the temple of the Fortune of Rome. The tutelary deity of the Roman greatness, an awful omen in this dark period of decline and dissolution, was in danger. A soldier, it is difficult to ascribe such temerity to any one but a Christian fanatic, uttered some words of insult against the revered, and it might be alienated, goddess. The indignant populace rushed upon the traitor to the majesty of Rome, and summoned the prætorian cohorts to wreak their vengeance on all who could be supposed to share in the sentiments of the apostate soldier. Maxentius is accused by one Christian and one Pagan historian, of having instigated the tumult ; by one Pagan he is said to have used his utmost exertions to allay its fury. Both statements may be true ; though at first he may have given free scope to the massacre, at a later period he may have taken alarm, and attempted

(1) In his letter to Sapor, King of Persia, Constantine himself acknowledges the influence of these motives on his mind : ὅν πολλοὶ τῶν τῆδε βασιλευσάντων, μανιάδεσι πλανάις ὑπαχθέντες, ἐπεχείρησαν ἀρνῆσασθαι, ἀλλ' ἐκείνους ἀπαντας τοιοῦτον

τιμωρὸν τέλος κατανάλωσεν, ὡς πᾶν τὸ μετ' ἐκείνους ἀνθρώπων γένος, τὰς ἐκείνων συμφορὰς ἀντ' ἄλλου παραδείγματος, ἐπαράτους τοῖς τὰ ὅμοια ζήλοῦσι τίθεσθαι. Apud Theodoret. Ecc. Hist. i. c. 25.

to restore the peace of the city (1). Of the direct hostility of Maxentius to Christianity, the evidence is dubious and obscure. A Roman matron preferred the glory, or the crime of suicide, rather than submit to his lustful embraces. But it was the beauty, no doubt, not the religion of Sophronia, which excited the passions of Maxentius, whose licentiousness comprehended almost all the noble families of Rome in its insulting range (2). The Papal history, not improbably resting on more ancient authority, represents Maxentius as degrading the Pope Marcellus to the humble function of a groom,—the predecessor of the Gregories and Innocents swept the imperial stable (3).

The darkening and more earnest Paganism of Maxentius is more clearly disclosed by the circumstances of his later history. He had ever listened with trembling deference to the expounders of signs and omens. He had suspended his expedition against Carthage, because the signs were not propitious (4). Before the battle of Verona, he commanded the Sybilline books to be consulted. “The enemy of the Romans will perish,” answered the prudent and ambiguous oracle; but who could be the enemy of Rome but the foreign Constantine, descending from his imperial residence at Treves, with troops levied in the barbarous provinces, and of whom the gods of Rome, though not yet declaredly hostile to their cause, might entertain a jealous suspicion.

On the advance of Constantine, Maxentius redoubled his religious activity. He paid his adoration at the altars of all the gods; he consulted all the diviners of future events (5). He had shut himself in his palace, the adverse signs made him take refuge in a private house (6). Darker rumours were propagated in the East: he is reported to have attempted to read the secrets of futurity in the entrails of pregnant women (7); to have sought an alliance with the infernal deities, and endeavoured by magical formularies to avert the impending danger. However the more enlightened Pagans might disclaim the weak, licentious, and sanguinary Maxentius, as the representative either of the Roman majesty or the Roman religion, in the popular mind, probably, an intimate connection united the cause of the Italian sovereign with the fortunes and the gods of Rome. It is possible that Constantine might attempt to array

His Paganism.

(1) The silence of Eusebius as to the Christianity of the soldier, may be thought an insuperable objection to this view. But in the first place, the Eastern bishop was but imperfectly informed on the affairs of Rome, and might hesitate, if aware of the fact, to implicate the Christian name with that which was so long one of the most serious and effective charges against the faith, its treacherous hostility to the greatness of Rome. The words of the Pagan Zosimus are very strong:—Βλάσφημα ῥήματα κατὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ στρατιωτῶν τις ἀρεῖς, καὶ

τοῦ πλήθους διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ Θεῖον εὐσέβειαν ἐπιληθόντος ἀναιρεθείς. Zos. Hist. ii. 13.

(2) Euseb. Vit. Const. i. 33, 34.

(3) Anastasius. Vit. Marcell.; Platina, Vit. Pontificum in Marcello.

(4) Zosimus, ii. 14.

(5) Euseb. Vit. Const. i. 21.; speaks of his κακοτέχνους καὶ γοητικὰς μαγανείας.

(6) Zosimus, ii. 14.

(7) Euseb. Vit. Const. i. 36.

against this imposing barrier of ancient superstition, the power of the new and triumphant faith : he might appeal, as it were, to the God of the Christians against the gods of the capital. His small, though victorious, army might derive courage in their attack on the fate-hallowed city, from whose neighbourhood Galerius had so recently returned in discomfiture, from a vague notion that they were under the protection of a tutelar deity, of whose nature they were but imperfectly informed, and whose worshippers constituted no insignificant part of their barbarian army.

Religion  
of Con-  
stantine.

Up to this period all that we know of Constantine's religion would imply that he was outwardly, and even zealously, Pagan. In a public oration his panegyrist extols the magnificence of his offerings to the gods (1). His victorious presence was not merely expected to restore more than their former splendour to the Gaulish cities, ruined by barbaric incursions, but sumptuous temples were to arise at his bidding, to propitiate the deities, particularly Apollo, his tutelar God. The medals struck for these victories are covered with the symbols of Paganism. Eusebius himself admits that Constantine was at this time in doubt which religion he should embrace ; and after his vision, required to be instructed in the doctrines of Christianity (2).

The scene in which the memorable vision of Constantine is laid, varies widely in the different accounts. Several places in Gaul lay claim to the honour of this momentous event in Christian history. If we assume the most probable period for such an occurrence, whatever explanation we adopt of the vision itself, it would be at this awful crisis in the destiny of Constantine and of the world, before the walls of Rome ; an instant when, if we could persuade ourselves that the Almighty Ruler, *in such a manner*, interposed to proclaim the fall of Paganism and the establishment of Christianity, it would have been a public and a solemn occasion, worthy of the Divine interference. No where, on the other hand, was the high-wrought imagination of Constantine so likely to be seized with religious awe, and to transform some extraordinary appearance in the heavens into the sign of the prevailing Deity of Christ ; no where, lastly, would policy more imperiously require some strong religious impulse to counterbalance the hostile terrors of Paganism, embattled against him.

Eusebius (3), the Bishop of Cæsarea, asserts that Constantine himself made, and confirmed by an oath, the extraordinary state-

(1) Merito igitur augustissima illa delubra tantis donariis honorasti, ut jam vetera non querant. Jam omnia vocare ad se templa videntur, præcipueque Apollo noster, cujus ferventibus aquis perjuria puniuntur, quæ te maxime oportet odisse. Nec magis Jovi Junonique recubantibus terra submisit, quam circa tua, Constantine, vestigia urbes et templa consurgunt. Bumenii Panegyri. cxxi.

(2) Ἐννοεῖ δὴ τὰ ὁποῖον δέος θεὸν ἐπι-  
γραψάσθαι βουλόμην. Euseb. Vit. Constant. c.  
27—32.

(3) Vit. Const. i. 28. The recent editor of Eusebius has well called the life of Constantine a Christian Cyropædia.



ment, which was received with implicit veneration during many ages of Christianity, but which the severer judgment of modern historical inquiry has called in question, investigated with the most searching accuracy, and almost universally destroyed its authority with rational men, yet, it must be admitted, found no satisfactory explanation of its origin (1). While Constantine was meditating in grave earnestness the claims of the rival religions, on one hand the awful fate of those who had persecuted Christianity, on the other the necessity of some divine assistance to counteract the magical incantations of his enemy, he addressed his prayers to the One great Supreme. On a sudden, a short time after noon, appeared a bright cross in the heavens, just above the sun, with this inscription, "By this, conquer." Awe seized himself and the whole army, who were witnesses of the wonderful phenomenon. But of the signification of the vision Constantine was altogether ignorant. Sleep fell upon his harassed mind, and during his sleep Christ himself appeared, and enjoined him to make a banner in the shape of that celestial sign, under which his arms would be for ever crowned with victory.

Constantine immediately commanded the famous labarum to be made,—the labarum which for a long time was borne at the head of the imperial armies, and venerated as a sacred relic at Constantinople. The shaft of this celebrated standard was cased with gold; above the transverse beam, which formed the cross, was wrought in a golden crown the monogram, or rather the device of two letters, which signified the name of Christ. And so for the first time

(1) The silence, not only of all cotemporary history (the legend of Artemius, abandoned even by Tillemont, does not deserve the name), but of Eusebius himself, in his Ecclesiastical History, gives a most dangerous advantage to those who altogether reject the story. But on whom is the invention of the story to be fathered? on Eusebius? who, although his conscience might not be delicately scrupulous on the subject of pious fraud, is charged with no more than the suppression of truth, not with the direct invention of falsehood. Or, on Constantine himself? Could it be with him a deliberate fiction to command the higher veneration of the Christian party? or had his imagination at the time, or was his memory in his later days, deceived by some inexplicable illusion?

The first excursus of Heinichen, in his edition of Eusebius, contains the fullest, and, on the whole, the most temperate and judicious discussion of this subject, so inexhaustibly interesting, yet so inexplicable, to the historical inquirer. There are three leading theories, variously modified by their different partisans. 1. A real miracle. 2. A natural phenomenon, presented to the imagination of the emperor. 3. A deliberate invention on the part of the Emperor, or of Eusebius. The first has few partisans in the present day. "Ut enim miraculo Constantinum a superstitione gentili avocatum esse, nemo facile hac ætate adhuc credit." Heinichen, p. 522. Independent of all other objections, the moral difficulty in the text is to me conclusive. The third has its partisans, but appears to me to be abso-

lutely incredible. But the general consent of the more learned and dispassionate writers seems in favour of the second, which was first, I believe, suggested by F. Albert Fabricius. In this concur Schroeck, the German church historian, Neander, Manso, Heinichen, and, in short, all modern writers who have any claim to historical criticism.

The great difficulty which encumbers the theory which resolves it into a solar halo or some natural phenomenon is the legend *ἐν τοῦτω νίκα*, which no optical illusion can well explain if it be taken literally. The only rational theory is to suppose that this was the inference drawn by the mind of Constantine, and embodied in these words; which, from being inscribed on the Labarum, or on the aras or any other public monument, as commemorative of the event, gradually grew into an inseparable part of the original vision.

The later and more poetic writers adorn the shields and the helmets of the whole army with the sign of the cross.

Testis Christicolæ ducis adventantis ad urbem  
Mulyius, exceptum Tiberina in stagna tyrannum  
Præcipitans, quam victricia viderit arma  
Majestate regi, quod signum dextera vindex  
Prætulêrit, quali radiarint stemmate pila.  
Christus purpureum, gemmanti textus in auro,  
Signabat labarum, clypeorum insignia Christus  
Scripserat: ardebat summis crux addita cristis,

Prudent. in Symmachum, v. 482.

Euseb. Vit. Const. i. 38.; E. H. ix. 9.; Zosimus, ii. 15.; Manso, Leben Constantins, p. 41. seqq.

the meek and peaceful Jesus became a God of battle ; and the cross, the holy sign of Christian redemption, a banner of bloody strife.

This irreconcilable incongruity between the symbol of universal peace and the horrors of war, in my judgment, is conclusive against the miraculous or supernatural character of the transaction (1). Yet the admission of Christianity, not merely as a controlling power, and the most effective auxiliary of civil government (an office not unbecoming its divine origin), but as the animating principle of barbarous warfare, argues at once the commanding influence which it had obtained over the human mind, as well as its degeneracy from its pure and spiritual origin. The unimpeached and unquestioned authority of this miracle during so many centuries, shows how completely, in the association which took place between Barbarism and Christianity, the former maintained its predominance. This was the first advance to the military Christianity of the Middle Ages, a modification of the pure religion of the Gospel, if directly opposed to its genuine principles, still apparently indispensable to the social progress of men ; through which the Roman empire and the barbarous nations, which were blended together in the vast European and Christian system, must necessarily have passed, before they could arrive at a higher civilisation and a purer Christianity.

The fate of Rome and of Paganism was decided in the battle of the Milvian Bridge ; the eventual result was the establishment of the Christian empire. But to Constantine himself, if at this time Christianity had obtained any hold upon his mind, it was now the Christianity of the warrior, as subsequently it was that of the statesman. It was the military commander who availed himself of the assistance of any tutelary divinity, who might insure success to his daring enterprise.

Christianity, in its higher sense, appeared neither in the acts nor in the decrees of the victorious Constantine after the defeat of Maxentius. Though his general conduct was tempered with a wise clemency, yet the execution of his enemies, and the barbarous death of the infant son of Maxentius, still showed the same relentless disposition which had exposed the barbarian chieftains, whom he had taken in his successful campaign beyond the Rhine, in the arena at Treves (2). The Emperor still maintained the same proud

Conduct  
of Con-  
stantine  
after his  
victory  
over  
Maxen-  
tius.

(1) I was agreeably surprised to find that Mosheim concurred in these sentiments, for which I will readily encounter the charge of Quakerism.

Hæcine oratio servatori generis humani, qui peccata hominum morte sua expiavit ; hæcine oratio illo digna est, qui pacis auctor mortalibus est, et suos hostibus agnoscere vult. \*\*\*\* Caveamus ne veterum Christianorum narrationibus de atatis suæ miraculis acris defendendis in ipsam majestatem Dei, et sanctissimam religionem, quæ non hostes, sed nos ipsos debellare docet, injurii simus. De Reb. ante Const. 985. When the Empress Helena, among the other treasures

of the tomb of Christ, found the nails which fastened him to the cross, Constantine turned them into a helmet and bits for his war-horse. Socrates, i. 17. True or fabulous, this story is characteristic of the *Christian* sentiment then prevalent.

(2) One of these barbarous acts was selected by the panegyric orator as a topic of the highest praise. Puberes, qui in manus venerunt et quorum nec perfidia erat apta militiæ, nec ferocia severitati, ad pœnas spectaculo dati, sævientes bestias multitudine suâ fatigantur, Eumenii Panegyri. c. xii.

superiority over the conflicting religions of the empire, which afterwards appeared at the foundation of the new metropolis. Even in the labarum, if the initiated eyes of the Christian soldiery could discern the sacred symbol of Christ indistinctly glittering above the cross, there appeared, either embossed on the beam below, or embroidered on the square purple banner which depended from it, the bust of the Emperor and those of his family, to whom the heathen part of his army might pay their homage of veneration. Constantine, though he does not appear to have ascended to the Capitol, to pay his homage and to offer sacrifice (1) to Jupiter the best and greatest, and the other tutelary deities of Rome, in general the first act of a victorious emperor, yet did not decline to attend the sacred games (2). Among the acts of the conqueror in Rome, was the restoration of the Pagan temples; among his imperial titles he did not decline that of the Pontifex Maximus (3). The province of Africa, in return for the bloody head of their oppressor Maxentius, was permitted to found a college of priests in honour of the Flavian family.

The first public edict of Constantine in favour of Christianity is lost; that issued at Milan in the joint names of Constantine and Licinius, is the great charter of the liberties of Christianity (4). But it is an edict of full and unlimited toleration, and no more. It recognises Christianity as one of the legal forms by which the Divinity may be worshipped (5). It performs an act of justice in restoring all the public buildings and the property which had been confiscated by the persecuting edicts of former emperors. Where the churches or their sites remained in the possession of the imperial treasury, they were restored without any compensation; where they had been alienated, the grants were resumed; where they had been purchased, the possessors were offered an indemnity for their enforced and immediate surrender, from the state. The præfects were to see the restitution carried into execution without delay, and without chicanery. But the same absolute freedom of worship was

Edict of  
Constantine from  
Milan.

(1) Euseb. Vit. Const. i. 51. Le Beau, Histoire du Bas Empire, l. ii. c. xvi.

(2) Nec quidquam aliud homines, diebus munerum sacerorumque ludorum, quam te ipsum spectare potuerunt. Incert. Pane. c. cix.

(3) Zosimus, iv. 36.

(4) The edict, or rather the copy, sent by Licinius to the Præfect of Bithynia in Lactantius, De Mori. Pers. xlviii.

(5) Decree of Milan, A. D. 313. Hæc ordinanda esse credidimus, ut daremus et Christianis et omnibus liberam potestatem sequendi religionem quam quisque voluisset, quod quidem divinitas in sede celestis nobis atque omnibus qui sub potestate nostrâ sunt constituti, placata ac propitia possit existere: (This divinitas, I conceive, was that equivocal term for the Supreme Deity, admitted by the Pagan as well as the Christian. What Zosimus called τὸ Θεῖον,) etiam aliis religionis suæ vel observantie potestatem similiter apertam, et liberam, pro quiete temporis nostri

esse concessam, ut in colendo quod quisque delegerit, habeat liberam facultatem, quia (nolimus detrabi) honori neque cuiquam religioni aliquid a nobis.

I will transcribe however the observations of Kestner on this point. Multi merito observârunt, animum illud ostendere sc. decretum Mediolense) ab antiqua religione minime alienum. Observandum vero, parum hoc decretum valere, ut veram Constantini mentem, inde intelligamus. Non solus quippe illius auctor fuit, sed Licinius quoque—Huic autem—et si iis (Christianis) non sincerus erat amicus, parcere debuit Constantinus; neque exteris displicere voluit subditis, qui antiquam religionem profiterentur. Quamvis igitur etiam religionis indole plenius jam fuisset imbutus, ob verum tamen, quæ id temporis erant, conditionem, manifestare mentem non potuisset. Kestner, Disp. de commut. quam, Constant. M. auct. societas subit Christiana. Compare Heineken, Excurs. in Vit. Const. 513.



secured to all other religions ; and this proud and equitable indifference is to secure the favour of the divinity to the reigning emperors. The whole tone of this edict is that of imperial clemency, which condescends to take under its protection an oppressed and injured class of subjects, rather than that of an awe-struck proselyte, esteeming Christianity the one true religion, and already determined to enthrone it as the dominant and established faith of the empire.

Earlier  
laws of  
Constantine.

The earlier laws of Constantine, though in their effects favourable to Christianity, claimed some deference, as it were, to the ancient religion in the ambiguity of their language, and the cautious terms in which they interfered with the liberty of Paganism. The rescript commanding the celebration of the Christian Sabbath, bears no allusion to its peculiar sanctity as a Christian institution. It is the day of the Sun, which is to be observed by the general veneration ; the courts were to be closed, and the noise and tumult of public business and legal litigation were no longer to violate the repose of the sacred day. But the believer in the new Paganism, of which the solar worship was the characteristic, might acquiesce without scruple in the sanctity of the first day of the week. The genius of Christianity appears more manifestly in the single civil act, which was exempted from the general restriction on public business. The courts were to be open for the manumission of slaves on the hallowed day (1). In the first aggression on the freedom of Paganism, though the earliest law speaks in a severe and vindictive tone, a second tempers the stern language of the former statute, and actually authorises the superstition against which it is directed, as far as it might be supposed beneficial to mankind. The itinerant soothsayers and diviners, who exercised their arts in private houses, formed no recognised part of the old religion. Their rites were supposed to be connected with all kinds of cruel and licentious practices—with magic and unlawful sacrifices. They performed their ceremonies at midnight among tombs, where they evoked the dead ; or in dark chambers, where they made libations of the blood of the living. They were darkly rumoured not to abstain, on occasions, from human blood, to offer children on the altar, and to read the secrets of futurity in the palpitating entrails of human victims. These unholy practices were proscribed by the old Roman law and the old Roman religion. This kind of magic was a capital offence by the laws of the Twelve Tables. Secret divinations had been interdicted by former emperors,—by Tiberius and by Dioclesian (2). The suppression of these rites by Constantine might appear no more than a strong regulation of police for the preservation of the public morals (3). The sooth-

Sanctity  
of the  
Sunday.

Against  
Divination.

(1) Cod. Theodos. ii. viii. 1. Vit. Constans. iv. 18.; Zosimus, i. 8.

(2) Haruspices secreto ac sine testibus consulti vetuit, Suetonius, Tib. c. 63. Ars mathematica

damnabilis est et interdicta omnino. Compare Beugnot, i. 79.

(3) It was addressed to Maximus, præfect of the city. Cod. Theodos. xi. 8. 2.

sayer who should presume to enter a private house to practise his unlawful art, was to be burned alive; those who received him were condemned to the forfeiture of their property and to exile. But in the public temple, according to the established rites, the priests and diviners might still unfold the secrets of futurity (1); the people were recommended to apply to them rather than to the unauthorised diviners, and this permission was more explicitly guaranteed by a subsequent rescript. Those arts which professed to avert the thunder from the house, the hurricane and the desolating shower from the fruitful field, were expressly sanctioned as beneficial to the husbandman. Even in case of the royal palace being struck by lightning, the ancient ceremony of propitiating the Deity was to be practised, and the haruspices were to declare the meaning of the awful portent (2).

Yet some acts of Constantine, even at this early period, might encourage the expanding hopes of the Christians, that they were destined before long to receive more than impartial justice from the Emperor. His acts of liberality were beyond those of a sovereign disposed to redress the wrongs of an oppressed class of his subjects; he not merely enforced by his edict the restoration of their churches and estates, he enabled them, by his own munificence—his gift of a large sum of money to the Christians of Africa—to rebuild their ruined edifices, and restore their sacred rites with decent solemnity (3). Many of the churches in Rome claim the first Christian Emperor for their founder. The most distinguished of these, and, at the same time, those which are best supported in their pretensions to antiquity, stood on the sites now occupied by the Lateran and by St. Peter's. If it could be ascertained at what period in the life of Constantine these churches were built, some light might be thrown on the history of his personal religion. For the Lateran being an imperial palace, the grant of a basilica within its walls for the Christian worship (for such we may conjecture to have been the first church), was a kind of direct recognition, if not of his own regular personal attendance, at least of his admission of Christianity within his domestic circle (4). The palace was afterwards granted to the Christians, the first patrimony of the Popes. The Vatican suburb seems to have been the favourite place for the settlement of foreign religions. It was thickly peopled with Jews from an early period (5); and remarkable vestiges of the worship of Cybele, which appear to have flourished side by side, as

Constantine's encouragement of Christianity.

Churches in Rome.

(1) *Adite aras publicas atque delubra, et consuetudinibus vestris celebrate solemnia: nec enim prohibemus præteritis usurpationis officia libera luce tractari.* Cod. Theod. xi. 16.

(2) Cod. Theodos. ix. 16. xvi. 10.

(3) See the original grant of 3000 folles to Cecilian, bishop of Carthage, in Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* x. 6.

(4) The Lateran was the residence of the Princess Fausta: it is called the *Domus Faustæ* in the account of the first synod held to decide on the Donatist schism. Optat. i. 23. Fausta may have been a Christian.

(5) Basnage, vii. 210.

it were, with that of Christianity, remained to the fourth, or the fifth, century (1). The site of St. Peter's church was believed to occupy the spot hallowed by his martyrdom; and the Christians must have felt no unworthy pride in employing the materials of Nero's circus, the scene of the sanguinary pleasures of the first persecutor, on a church dedicated to the memory of his now honoured, if not absolutely worshipped, victim.

With the protection, the Emperor assumed the control over the affairs of the Christian communities: to the cares of the public administration was added a recognised supremacy over the Christian church; the extent to which Christianity now prevailed, is shown by the importance at once assumed by the Christian bishops, who brought not only their losses and their sufferings during the persecution of Dioclesian, but, unhappily, likewise their quarrels before the imperial tribunal. From his palace at Treves, Constantine had not only to assemble military councils to debate on the necessary measures for the protection of the German frontier, and the maintenance of the imperial armies; councils of finance, to remodel and enforce the taxation of the different provinces; but synods of Christian bishops to decide on the contests which had grown up in the remote and unruly province of Africa. The emperor himself is said frequently to have appeared without his imperial state, and, with neither guards nor officers around him, to have mingled in the debate, and expressed his satisfaction at their unanimity, whenever that rare virtue adorned their counsels (2). For Constantine, though he could give protection, could not give peace to Christianity. It is the nature of men, that whatever powerfully moves, agitates to excess the public mind. With new views of those subjects which make a deep and lasting impression, new passions awaken. The profound stagnation of the human mind during the government of the earlier Cæsars had been stirred in its inmost depths, by the silent underworking of the new faith. Momentous questions, which, up to that time, had been entirely left to a small intellectual aristocracy, had been calmly debated in the villa of the Roman senator or the grove sacred to philosophy, or discussed by sophists, whose frigid dialectics wearied without exciting the mind, had been gradually brought down to the common apprehension. The nature of the Deity; the state of the soul after death; the equality of mankind in the sight of the Deity; even questions which are beyond the verge of human intellect; the origin of evil; the connection of the physical and moral world, had become general topics; they were, for the first time, the primary truths of a popular religion, and naturally could not withdraw themselves from the alliance with popular passions. These

(1) Bunsen und Platner Roms' Beschreibung.  
i. p. 23.

δεικνύς ἑαυτὸν τῇ κοινῇ πάντων ὁμονοίᾳ.  
Eusebius says that he conducted himself as the  
(2) Euseb. Vit. Const. lib. xlv. χαίροντα  
bishop of the bishops.



passions, as Christianity increased in power and influence, came into more active operation; as they seized on persons of different temperament, instead of being themselves subdued to Christian gentleness, they inflamed Christianity, as it appeared to the world, into a new and more indomitable principle of strife and animosity. Mankind, even within the sphere of Christianity, retrograded to the sterner Jewish character; and in its spirit, as well as in its language, the Old Testament began to dominate over the Gospel of Christ.

The first civil wars which divided Christianity were those of Donatism and the Trinitarian controversy. The Gnostic sects, in their different varieties, and the Manichean, were rather rival religions than Christian factions. Though the adherents of these sects professed to be disciples of Christianity, yet they had their own separate constitutions, their own priesthood, their own ceremonial. Donatism was a fierce and implacable schism in an established community. It was embraced with all the wild ardour, and maintained with the blind obstinacy, of the African temperament. It originated in a disputed appointment to the episcopal dignity at Carthage. The Bishop of Carthage, if in name inferior (for every thing connected with the ancient capital still maintained its superior dignity in the general estimation), stood higher, probably, in proportion to the extent of his influence, and the relative numbers of his adherents, as compared with the Pagan population, than any Christian dignitary in the West. The African churches had suffered more than usual oppression during the persecution of Dioclesian, not improbably during the invasion of Maxentius. External force, which in other quarters compressed the body into closer and more compact unity, in Africa left behind it a fatal principle of disorganisation. These rival claims to the see of Carthage brought the opponent parties into inevitable collision.

The pontifical offices of Paganism, ministering in a ceremonial, to which the people were either indifferent, or bound only by habitual attachment, calmly descended in their hereditary course, were nominated by the municipal magistracy, or attached to the higher civil offices. They awoke no ambition, they caused no contention; they did not interest society enough to disturb it. The growth of the sacerdotal power was a necessary consequence of the development of Christianity. The hierarchy asserted (they were believed to possess) the power of sealing the eternal destiny of man. From a post of danger, which modest piety was compelled to assume by the unsought and unsolicited suffrages of the whole community, a bishopric had become an office of dignity, influence, and at times, of wealth. The prelate ruled not now so much by his admitted superiority in Christian virtue, as by the inalienable authority of his office. He opened or closed the door of the church, which was

Dissensions of Christianity.

Donatism.

Christian hierarchy different from Pagan priesthood.

tantamount to an admission or an exclusion from everlasting bliss; he uttered the sentence of excommunication, which cast back the trembling delinquent among the lost and perishing Heathen. He had his throne in the most distinguished part of the Christian temple; and though yet acting in the presence and in the name of his college of presbyters, yet he was the acknowledged head of a large community, over whose eternal destiny he held a vague, but not therefore less imposing and awful dominion. Among the African Christians, perhaps by the commanding character of Cyprian, in his writings, at least, the episcopal power is elevated to its utmost height. No wonder that, with the elements of strife fermenting in the society, and hostile parties already arrayed against each other, the contest for this commanding post should be commenced with blind violence, and carried on with irreconcilable hostility (1). In every community, no doubt, had grown up a severer party, who were anxious to contract the pale of salvation to the narrowest compass; and a more liberal class, who were more lenient to the infirmities of their brethren, and would extend to the utmost limits the beneficial effects of the redemption. The fiery ordeal of the persecution tried the Christians of Africa by the most searching test, and drew more strongly the line of demarcation. Among the summary proceedings of the persecution, which were carried into effect with unrelenting severity by Anulinus, the Præfect of Africa (the same who, by a singular vicissitude in political affairs, became the instrument of Constantine's munificent grants to the churches of his province) (2), none was more painful to the feelings of the Christians than the demand of the unconditional surrender of the furniture of their sacred edifices; their chalices, their ornaments, above all, the sacred writings (3). The bishop and his priests were made responsible for the full and unreserved delivery of these sacred possessions. Some from timidity, others considering that by such concessions, it might be prudent to avert more dangerous trials, and that such treasures, sacred as they were might be replaced in a more flourishing state of the church, complied with the demands of the magistrate; but, by their severe brethren, who with more uncompromising courage, had refused the least departure from the tone of unqualified resistance, they were branded with the ignominious name of Traditors (4). This became the strong, the impassable, line of demarcation between the contending factions. To

The Tra-  
ditors.

(1) The principal source of information concerning the Donatist controversy is the works of Optatus, with the valuable collection of documents subjoined to them; and for their later history, various passages in the works of St. Augustine.

(2) See the grant of Constantine referred to above.

(3) There is a very curious and graphic account of the rigorous requisition for the sacred

books in the *Gesta* apud Zenophilum in Routh, vol. iv. p. 103. The codices appear to have been under the care of the readers, who were of various ranks, mostly, however, in trade. There were a great number of codices, each probably containing one book of the Scriptures.

(4) The Donatists invariably called the Catholic party the Traditors. See *Sermo Donatista* and the *Acts of the Donatist Martyr*.

the latest period of the conflict, the Donatists described the Catholic party by that odious appellation.

The primacy of the African church was the object of ambition to these two parties : an unfortunate vacancy at this time kindled the smouldering embers of strife. Mensurius had filled the see of Carthage with prudence and moderation during these times of emergency. He was accused by the sterner zeal of Donatus, a Numidian bishop, of countenancing, at least, the criminal concessions of the Traditors. It was said that he had deluded the government by a subtle stratagem ; he had substituted certain heretical writings for the genuine Scriptures ; had connived at their seizure, and calmly seen them delivered to the flames. The Donatists either disbelieved or despised, as a paltry artifice, this attempt to elude the glorious danger of resistance. But, during the life of Mensurius, his character and station had overawed the hostile party. But Mensurius was summoned to Rome, to answer to a charge of the concealment of the deacon Felix, accused of a political offence,—the publication of a libel against the Emperor. On his departure, he entrusted to the deacons of the community the valuable vessels of gold and silver belonging to the church, of which he left an accurate inventory in the hands of a pious and aged woman. Mensurius died on his return to Carthage. Cæcilian, a deacon of the church, was raised by the unanimous suffrages of the clergy and people to the see of Carthage. He was consecrated by Felix, Bishop of Aphunga. His first step was to demand the vessels of the church. By the advice of Botrus and Celeusius, two of the deacons, competitors it is said with Cæcilian for the see, they were refused to a bishop irregularly elected, and consecrated by a notorious Traditor. A Spanish female, of noble birth and of opulence, accused of personal hostility to Cæcilian, animated the Carthaginian faction ; but the whole province assumed the right of interference with the appointment to the primacy, and Donatus, Bishop of Casæ Nigræ, placed himself at the head of the opponent party. The commanding mind of Donatus swayed the countless hierarchy which crowded the different provinces of Africa. The Numidian bishops took the lead ; Secundus, the primate of Numidia, at the summons of Donatus, appeared in Carthage at the head of seventy of his bishops. This self-installed Council of Carthage proceeded to cite Cæcilian, who refused to recognise its authority. The Council declared his election void. The consecration by a bishop guilty of tradition, was the principal ground on which his election was annulled. But darker charges were openly advanced, or secretly murmured, against Cæcilian ; charges which, if not entirely ungrounded, show that the question of tradition had, during the persecution, divided the Christians into fierce and hostile factions. He was said to have embittered the last hours of those, whose more dauntless resistance put to shame the

Contest  
for the see  
of Car-  
thage.

Appeal to  
the civil  
power.



Council of  
Rome.

timorous compliance of Mensurius and his party. He took his station, with a body of armed men, and precluded the pious zeal of their adherents from obtaining access to the prison of those who had been seized by the government (1); he prevented, not merely the consolatory and inspiring visits of kinsmen and friends, but even the introduction of food and other comforts, in their state of starving destitution. The Carthaginian faction proceeded to elect Majorinus to the vacant see. Both parties appealed to the civil power; and Anulinus, the Præfect of Africa, who during the reign of Dioclesian had seen the Christians dragged before his tribunal, and whose authority they then disclaimed with uncompromising unanimity, now saw them crowding in hostile factions to demand his interference in their domestic discords. The cause was referred to the imperial decision of Constantine. At a later period the Donatists, being worsted in the strife, bitterly reproached their adversaries with this appeal to the civil tribunal, "What have Christians to do with kings, or bishops with palaces (2)?" Their adversaries justly recriminated, that they had been as ready as themselves to request the intervention of the government. Constantine delegated the judgment in their cause to the bishops of Gaul (3); but the first council was composed of a great majority of Italian bishops; and Rome, for the first time, witnessed a public trial of a Christian cause before an assembly of bishops, presided over by her prelate. The Council was formed of the three Gallic bishops of Cologne, of Autun, and of Arles. The Italian bishops (we may conjecture that these were considered the more important sees, or were filled by the most influential prelates), were those of Milan, Cesena, Quintiano, Rimini, Florence, Pisa, Faenza, Capua, Benevento, Terracina, Præneste, Tres Tabernæ, Ostia, Ursinum (Urbium), Forum Claudii. Cæcilian and Donatus appeared each at the head of ten bishops of his party. Both denounced their adversaries as guilty of the crime of tradition. The partisans of Donatus rested their appeal on the invalidity of an ordination by a bishop, Felix of Aphunga, who had been guilty of that delinquency. The party of Cæcilian accused almost the whole of the Numidian bishops, and Donatus himself, as involved in the same guilt. It was a wise and temperate policy in the Catholic party, to attempt to cancel all embittering recollections of the days of trial and infirmity; to abolish all distinctions, which on one part led to pride, on the other to degradation; to reconcile in the halcyon days of prosperity, the whole Christian world into one harmonious con-

(1) Optatus, i. 22.

(2) Optatus, i. 22.

(3) Augustin, writing when the episcopal authority stood on a nearer or even a higher level than that of the throne, asserts that Constantine did not dare to assume a cognisance over the election of a bishop. *Constantinus non ausus est de causâ episcopi judicare*. Epist. cv. n. 8. Natural equity as well as other reasons would induce

Constantine to delegate the affair to a Christian commission. The account of Optatus ascribes to Constantine speeches which it is difficult to reconcile with his public conduct as regards Christianity at this period of his life. The council of Rome was held A.D. 313, 2d October.

The decrees of the Council of Rome and of Arles, with other documents on the subject, may be found in the fourth volume of Routh.

federacy. This policy was that of the government. At this early period of his Christianity, if he might yet be called a Christian, Constantine was little likely to enter into the narrow and exclusive principles of the Donatists. As an emperor, Christianity was recommended to his favour by the harmonising and tranquillising influence which it exercised over a large body of the people. If it broke up into hostile feuds, it lost its value as an ally, or an instrument of civil government. But it was exactly this levelling of all religious distinctions, this liberal and comprehensive spirit, that would annihilate the less important differences, which struck at the vital principle of Donatism. They had confronted all the malice of the persecutor, they had disdained to compromise any principle, to concede the minutest point; and were they to abandon a superiority so hardly earned, and to acquiesce in the readmission of all those who had forfeited their Christian privileges to the same rank? Were they not to exercise the high function of readmission into the fold with proper severity? The decision of the Council was favourable to the cause of Cæcilian. Donatus appealed to the Emperor, who retained the heads of both parties in Italy, to allow time for the province to regain its quiet. In defiance of the Emperor, both the leaders fled back to Africa, to set themselves at the head of their respective factions. The patient Constantine summoned a new, a more remote council at Arles: Cæcilian and the African bishops were cited to appear in that distant province; public vehicles were furnished for their conveyance at the Emperor's charge; each bishop was attended by two of his inferior clergy, with three domestics. The Bishop of Arles presided in this Council, which confirmed the judgment of that in Rome. A. D. 314.  
1st Aug.

A second Donatus now appeared upon the scene, of more vigorous and more persevering character, greater ability, and with all the energy and self-confidence which enabled him to hold together the faction. They now assumed the name of Donatists. On the death of Majorinus, Donatus succeeded to the dignity of Anti-Bishop of Carthage: the whole African province continued to espouse the quarrel; the authority of the government, which had been invoked by both parties, was scornfully rejected by that against which the award was made. Three times was the decision repeated in favour of the Catholic party, at Rome, at Arles, and at Milan; each time A. D. 316. was more strongly established the self-evident truth, which was so late recognised by the Christian world, the incompetency of any council to reconcile religious differences. The suffrages of the many cannot bind the consciences, or enlighten the minds, or even overcome the obstinacy, of the few. Neither party can yield without abandoning the very principles by which they have been constituted a party. A commission issued to Ælius, Præfect of the district, to examine the charge against Felix, Bishop of Apthunga, gave a

Donatist  
persecut-  
ed.

favourable verdict (1). An imperial commission of two delegates to Carthage, ratified the decision of the former councils. At every turn the Donatists protested against the equity of the decree ; they loudly complained of the unjust and partial influence exercised by Osius, Bishop of Cordova, over the mind of the Emperor. At length the tardy indignation of the government had recourse to violent measures. The Donatist bishops were driven into exile, their churches destroyed or sold, and the property seized for the imperial revenue. The Donatists defied the armed interference, as they had disclaimed the authority of the government. This first development of the principles of Christian sectarianism was as stern, as inflexible, and as persevering, as in later times. The Donatists drew their narrow pale around their persecuted sect, and asserted themselves to be the only elect people of Christ ; the only people whose clergy could claim an unbroken apostolical succession, vitiated in all other communities of Christians by the inextinguishable crime of tradition. Wherever they obtained possession of a church they burned the altar ; or, where wood was scarce, scraped off the infection of heretical communion ; they melted the cups, and sold, it was said, the sanctified metal for profane, perhaps for Pagan, uses ; they rebaptised all who joined their sect ; they made the virgins renew their vows ; they would not even permit the bodies of the Catholics to repose in peace, lest they should pollute the common cemeteries. The implacable faction darkened into a sanguinary feud. For the first time human blood was shed in conflicts between followers of the Prince of Peace. Each party recriminated on the other, but neither denies the barbarous scenes of massacre and licence which devastated the African cities. The Donatists boasted of their martyrs, and the cruelties of the Catholic party rest on their own admission : they deny not, they proudly vindicate their barbarities. “ Is the vengeance of God to be defrauded of its victims (2)? ” and they appeal to the Old Testament to justify, by the examples of Moses, of Phineas, and of Elijah, the Christian duty of slaying by thousands the renegades, or the unbelievers.

A. D. 321.

The Circumcellions.

In vain Constantine at length published an edict of peace : the afflicted province was rent asunder till the close of his reign, and during that of his son, by this religious warfare. For, on the other hand, the barbarous fanaticism of the Circumcellions involved the Donatist party in the guilt of insurrection, and connected them with revolting atrocities, which they were accused of countenancing, of exciting, if not actually sanctioning by their presence. That which in the opulent cities, or the well-ordered communities, led

(1) See the *Acta Purgationis Felicis*, in Routh, iv. 71.

(2) This damning passage is found in the work of the Catholic Optatus : *Quasi omnia in vindictam Dei nullus mereatur occidi*. Compare the whole chapter, iii. 4. There is a very strong

statement of the persecutions which they endured from the Catholics in the letter put in by the Donatist bishop Habet Deum in the conference held during the reign of Honorius. Apud Dupin, No. 258. in fine.



to fierce and irreconcilable contention, grew up among the wild borderers on civilisation into fanatical frenzy. Where Christianity has outstripped civilisation, and has not had time to effect its beneficent and humanising change, whether in the bosom of an old society, or within the limits of savage life, it becomes, in times of violent excitement, instead of a pacific principle to assuage, a new element of ungovernable strife. The long peace which had been enjoyed by the province of Africa, and the flourishing corn-trade which it conducted as the granary of Rome and of the Italian provinces, had no doubt extended the pursuits of agriculture into the Numidian, Gætulian, and Mauritanian villages. The wild tribes had gradually become industrious peasants, and among them Christianity had found an open field for its exertions, and the increasing agricultural settlements had become Christian bishoprics. But the savage was yet only half-tamed; and no sooner had the flames of the Donatist conflict spread into these peaceful districts, than the genuine Christian was lost in the fiery marauding child of the desert. Maddened by oppression, wounded in his religious feelings by the expulsion and persecution of the bishops, from his old nature he resumed the fierce spirit of independence, the contempt for the laws of property, and the burning desire of revenge: of his new religion he retained only the perverted language, or rather that of the Old Testament, with an implacable hatred of all hostile sects; a stern ascetic continence, which perpetually broke out into paroxysms of unbridled licentiousness; and a fanatic passion for martyrdom, which assumed the acts of a kind of methodical insanity.

The Circumcellions commenced their ravages during the reign of Constantine, and continued in arms during that of his successor Constans. No sooner had the provincial authorities received instructions to reduce the province by force to religious unity, than the Circumcellions, who had at first confined their ravages to disorderly and hasty incursions, broke out into open revolt (1). They defeated one body of the imperial troops, and killed Ursacius, the Roman general. They abandoned, by a simultaneous impulse, their agricultural pursuits; they proclaimed themselves the instruments of divine justice, and the protectors of the oppressed; they first asserted the wild theory of the civil equality of mankind, which has so often, in later periods of the world, become the animating principle of Christian fanaticism; they proclaimed the abolition of slavery; they thrust the proud and opulent master from his chariot, and made him walk by the side of his slave, who, in his turn, was placed in the stately vehicle; they cancelled all debts, and realised the debtors; their most sanguinary acts were perpetrated in the name of religion, and Christian language was profaned by its association with

(1) The Circumcellions were unacquainted with the Latin language, and are said to have spoken only the Punic of the country.

Passion for  
martyr-  
dom.

their atrocities; their leaders were the Captains of the Saints (1); the battle hymn, Praise to God! their weapons were not swords, for Christ had forbidden the use of the sword to Peter, but huge and massy clubs, with which they beat their miserable victims to death (2). They were bound by vows of the severest continence, but the African temperament, in its state of feverish excitement, was too strong for the bonds of fanatical restraint; the companies of the Saints not merely abused the privileges of war by the most licentious outrages on the females, but were attended by troops of drunken prostitutes, whom they called their sacred virgins. But the most extraordinary development of their fanaticism, was their rage for martyrdom. When they could not obtain it from the sword of the enemy, they inflicted it upon themselves. The ambitious martyr declared himself a candidate for the crown of glory: he then gave himself up to every kind of revelry, pampering, as it were, and fattening the victim for sacrifice. When he had wrought himself to the pitch of frenzy, he rushed out, and, with a sword in one hand and money in the other, he threatened death and offered reward to the first comer who would satisfy his eager longings for the glorious crown. They leapt from precipices; they went into the Pagan temples to provoke the vengeance of the worshippers.

Such are the excesses to which Christianity is constantly liable, as the religion of a savage and uncivilised people; but, on the other hand, it must be laid down as a political axiom equally universal, that this fanaticism rarely bursts out into disorders dangerous to society, unless goaded and maddened by persecution.

Donatism was the fatal schism of one province of Christendom: the few communities formed on these rigid principles in Spain and in Rome died away in neglect; but however diminished its influence, it distracted the African province for three centuries, and was only finally extirpated with Christianity itself, by the all-absorbing progress of Mahometanism. At one time Constantine resorted to milder measures, and issued an edict of toleration. But in the reign of Constans, the persecution was renewed with more unrelenting severity. Two imperial officers, Paul and Macurius, were sent to reduce the province to religious unity. The Circumcellions encountered them with obstinate valour, but were totally defeated in the sanguinary battle of Bagnia. In the later reigns, when the laws against heresy became more frequent and severe, the Donatists were named with marked reprobation in the condemnatory edicts. Yet, in the time of Honorius, they boasted in a conference with the Catholics, that they equally divided at least the province of Numi-

(1) Augustin asserts that they were led by their clergy, v. xi. p. 575.

(2) The Donatists anticipated our Puritans in those strange religious names which they assumed, *Habet Deum* appears among the Dona-

tist bishops in a conference held with the Catholics at Carthage. *A. D.* 411. See the report of the conference in the *Donatistan Monumenta* collected by Dupin, at the end of his edition of Optatus.

dia, and that the Catholics only obtained a majority of bishops by the unfair means of subdividing the sees. This conference was held in the vain, though then it might not appear ungrounded, hope of reuniting the great body of the Donatists with the Catholic communion. The Donatists, says Gibbon, with his usual sarcasm, and more than his usual truth, had received a practical lesson on the consequences of their own principles. A small sect, the Maximinians, had been formed within their body, who asserted themselves to be the only genuine church of God, denied the efficacy of the sacraments, disclaimed the apostolic power of the clergy, and rigidly appropriated to their own narrow sect the merits of Christ, and the hopes of salvation. But neither this fatal warning, nor the eloquence of St. Augustin, wrought much effect on the Puritans of Africa; they still obstinately denied the legality of Cæcilian's ordination; still treated their adversaries as the dastardly traditors of the Sacred Writings; still dwelt apart in the unquestioning conviction that they were the sole subjects of the kingdom of Heaven; that to them alone belonged the privilege of immortality through Christ, while the rest of the world, the unworthy followers of Christ, not less than the blind and unconverted Heathen, were perishing in their outcast and desperate state of condemnation.

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## CHAPTER II.


### CONSTANTINE BECOMES SOLE EMPEROR.

By the victory over Maxentius, Constantine had become master of half the Roman world. Christianity, if it had not contributed to the success, shared the advantage of the triumph. By the edict of Milan the Christians had resumed all their former rights as citizens, their churches were re-opened, their public services recommenced, and their silent work of aggression on the hostile Paganism began again under the most promising auspices. The equal favour with which they were beheld by the sovereign, appeared both to their enemies and to themselves an open declaration on their side. The public acts, the laws, and the medals of Constantine (1), show how the lofty eclectic indifferentism of the Emperor, which extended impartial protection over all the conflicting faiths, or attempted to mingle together their least inharmonious elements, gradually but

The East  
still Pa-  
gan.

(1) Eckhel supposes that the heathen symbols disappeared from the coins of Constantine after his victory over Licinius. *Doctr. Numm. in Constant.*

I may add here another observation of this great authority on such subjects. Execute uni-

versam Constantini monetam, nunquam in eâ aut Christi imaginem aut Constantini effigiem cruce insignem reperies\*\*\* In nonnullis jam monogramma Christi  inseritur labaro aut vexillo, jam in arcâ nummi solitariè excubant, jam aliis, ut patebit, comparat modis.



slowly gave place to the progressive influence of Christianity. Christian bishops appeared as regular attendants upon the court; the internal dissensions of Christianity became affairs of state; the Pagan party saw, with increasing apprehension for their own authority and the fate of Rome, the period of the secular games, on the due celebration of which depended the duration of the Roman sovereignty, pass away unhonoured (1). It was an extraordinary change in the constitution of the Western world, when the laws of the empire issued from the court of Treves, and Italy and Africa awaited the changes in their civil and religious constitution, from the seat of government on the barbarous German frontier. The munificent grant of Constantine for the restoration of the African churches, had appeared to commit him in favour of the Christian party, and had perhaps indirectly contributed to inflame the dissensions in that province.

A. D. 315.

Clerical  
order re-  
cognised  
by the  
law.

A new law recognised the clerical order as a distinct and privileged class. It exempted them from the onerous municipal offices, which had begun to press heavily upon the more opulent inhabitants of the towns. It is the surest sign of misgovernment, when the higher classes shrink from the posts of honour and of trust. During the more flourishing days of the empire, the Decurionate, the chief municipal dignity, had been the great object of provincial ambition. The Decurions formed the senates of the towns; they supplied the magistrates from their body, and had the right of electing them (2).

Under the new financial system introduced by Dioclesian, the decurions were made responsible for the full amount of taxation imposed by the cataster or assessment on the town and district. As the payment became more onerous or difficult, the tenants, or even the proprietors, either became insolvent, or fled their country. But the inexorable revenue still exacted from the decurions the whole sum assessed on their town or district. The office itself grew into disrepute, and the law was obliged to force that upon the reluctant citizen of wealth or character, which had before been an object of eager emulation and competition (3). The Christians obtained the exemption of their ecclesiastical order from these civil offices. The exemption was grounded on the just plea of its incompatibility with their religious duties (4). The Emperor declared in a letter to Cæcilian, bishop of Carthage, that the Christian priesthood ought not

(1) Zosimus, l. ii. c. 1.

(2) Savigny *Römische Recht*, i. 18. Compare the whole book of the Theodosian Code, *De Decurionibus*. Persons concealed their property to escape serving the public offices, *Cod. Theod.* iii. 1—8.

(3) See two dissertations of Savigny on the taxation of the empire, in the *Transactions of the Berlin Academy*, and translated in the *Cambridge Classical Researches*.

(4) The officers of the royal household, and their descendants, had the same exemption, which was likewise extended to the Jewish *archi-synagogi* or elders. *Le Beau*, 165. *Cod. Theodos.* xvi. 8. 2.

The priests and the Flamines, with the decurions, were exempt from certain inferior offices. *xiii. v. 2.*

to be withdrawn from the worship of God, which is the principal source of the prosperity of the empire. The effect of this immunity shows the oppressed and disorganised state of society (1) : numbers of persons, in order to secure this exemption, rushed at once into the clerical order of the Christians ; and this manifest abuse demanded an immediate modification of the law. None were to be admitted into the sacred order, except on the vacancy of a religious charge, and then those only whose poverty exempted them from the municipal functions (2). Those whose property imposed upon them the duty of the Decurionate, were ordered to abandon their religious profession. Such was the despotic power of the sovereign, to which the Christian church still submitted, either on the principle of passive obedience, or in gratitude for the protection of the civil authority. The legislator interfered without scruple in the domestic administration of the Christian community, and the Christians received the imperial edicts in silent submission. The appointment of a Christian, the celebrated Lactantius, to superintend the education of Crispus, the eldest son of the Emperor, was at once a most decisive and most influential step towards the public declaration of Christianity as the religion of the imperial family. Another important law, the groundwork of the vast property obtained by the church, gave it the fullest power to receive the bequests of the pious. Their right of holding property had been admitted apparently by Alexander Severus, annulled by Dioclesian, and was now conceded in the most explicit terms by Constantine (3).

A. D. 320.  
Exemption from the Decurionate.

But half the world remained still disunited from the dominion of Constantine and of Christianity. The first war with Licinius had been closed by the battles of Cibalæ and Mardia, and a new partition of the empire. It was succeeded by a hollow and treacherous peace of nine years (4). The favour shown by Constantine to his Christian subjects, seems to have thrown Licinius upon the opposite interest. The edict of Milan had been issued in the joint names of the two Emperors. In his conflict with Maximin, Licinius had avenged the oppressions of Christianity on their most relentless adversary. But when the crisis approached, which was to decide the fate of the whole empire, as Constantine had adopted every means of securing their cordial support, so Licinius repelled the allegiance of his Christian subjects by disfavour, by mistrust, by expulsion from offices of honour, by open persecution, till, in the language of the ecclesiastical historian, the world was divided into two regions, those of day and of night (5). The vices, as well

Wars with Licinius.

(1) See the various laws on this subject. Codex Theodos. xvi. 2, 3. 6—11.

(2) Cod. Theodos. xvi. 2. 17. 19.

(3) Habeat unusquisque licentiam, sanctissimo Catholice venerabilique concilio, decedens bonorum, quod placet, relinquere. Non sint cassa judicia, nihil est, quod magis hominibus debe-

tur, quam ut supremæ voluntatis, postquam aliud jam velle non possint, liber sit status, et liceus, quod iterum non redit imperium. C. Th. xvi. 2. 4. De Episcopis. This law is assigned to the year 321.

(4) 314 to 323.

(5) Euseb. vita Constant. i. 49.

Licinius  
becomes  
more d.  
cidedly  
Pagan.

as the policy of Licinius might disincline him to endure the importunate presence of the Christian bishops in his court; but he might disguise his hostile disposition to the churchmen in his declared dislike of eunuchs and of courtiers (1),—the vermin as he called them, of the palace. The stern avarice of Licinius would be contrasted to his disadvantage with the profuse liberality of Constantine; his looser debaucheries with the severer morals of the Western Emperor. Licinius proceeded to purge his household troops of those whose inclination to his rival he might, not without reason, mistrust; none were permitted to retain their rank who refused to sacrifice. He prohibited the synods of the clergy, which he naturally apprehended might degenerate into conspiracies in favour of his rival. He confined the bishops to the care of their own dioceses (2). He affected in his care for the public morals, to prohibit the promiscuous worship of men and women in the churches (3); and insulted the sanctity of the Christian worship, by commanding that it should be celebrated in the open air. The edict prohibiting all access to the prisons, though a strong and unwilling testimony to the charitable exertions of the Christians, and by their writers represented as an act of wanton and unexampled inhumanity, was caused probably by a jealous policy, rather than by causeless cruelty of temper. It is quite clear that the prayers of the Christians, perhaps more worldly weapons, were armed in favour of Constantine. The Eastern churches would be jealous of their happier Western brethren, and naturally would be eager to bask in the equal sunshine of imperial favour. At length, either fearing the effect of their prayers with the Deity whom they addressed (4), or their influence in alienating the minds of their votaries from his own cause to that of him who, in the East, was considered the champion of the Christian cause, Licinius commanded the Christian churches in Pontus to be closed; he destroyed some of them, perhaps for the defiance of his edicts. Some acts of persecution took place, the Christians fled again into the country, and began to conceal themselves in the woods and caves. Many instances of violence, some of martyrdom, occurred (5), particularly in Pontus. There was a wide-spread apprehension that a new and general persecution was about to break out, when the Empe-

(1) Spadonum et Aulicorum omnium vehemens domitor, tineas soricesque palatii eos appellans. Aur. Vict. Epit.

(2) Vit. Constant. i. 41.

(3) Vit. Constant. Women were to be instructed by the deaconesses alone. Vit. Const. i. 53.

(4) Συντελείσθαι γάρ οὐκ ἤγειτο ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τὰς εὐχάς, συνειδύτι φαύλα τοῦτο λογίζμενος, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τοῦ Θεοφιλοῦς βασιλέως πάντα πράττειν ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸν Θεὸν ἰκευεσθαι πέπειστο. Euseb. x. 8.

(5) Sozomen, H. E. i. 7., asserts, that many of the clergy, as well as bishops, were martyred. Dodwell however observes (De Paucitate Martyrum, 91.) Caveant fabulatores ne quos alios sub Licinio martyres faciant præterquam episcopos. Compare Ruinart. There is great difficulty about Basileus, Bishop of Amasa. He is generally reckoned by the Greek writers as a martyr (see Pagi ad an. 316. n. x.;) but he is expressly stated by Philostorgius (lib. i.), confirmed by Athanasius (Orat. 1. contra Arianos), to have been present at the Council of Nice some years afterwards.



ror of the West moved, in the language of the Christian historian, to rescue the whole of mankind from the tyranny of one (1).

Whether, in fact, Licinius avowed the imminent war to be a strife for mastery between the two religions, the decisive struggle between the ancient gods of Rome and the new divinity of the Christians (2); whether he actually led the chief officers and his most eminent political partisans into a beautiful consecrated grove, crowded with the images of the gods; and appealed, by the light of blazing torches, and the smoke of sacrifice, to the gods of their ancestors against his atheistic adversaries, the followers of a foreign and unknown deity, whose ignominious sign was displayed in the van of their armies; yet the propagation of such stories shows how completely, according to their own sentiments, the interests of Christianity were identified with the cause of Constantine (3). On both sides were again marshalled all the supernatural terrors which religious hope or superstitious awe could summon. Diviners, soothsayers, and Egyptian magicians, animated the troops of Licinius (4). The Christians in the army of Constantine attributed all their success to the prayers of the pious bishops who accompanied his army, and especially to the holy labarum, whose bearer passed unhurt among showers of fatal javelins (5).

The battle of Hadrianople, and the naval victory of Crispus, decided the fate of the world, and the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the empire. The death of Licinius reunited the whole Roman world under the sceptre of Constantine.

Battle of  
Hadrian-  
ople.  
A. D. 323.

Eusebius ascribes to Constantine, during this battle, an act of Christian mercy, at least as unusual as the appearance of the banner of the cross at the head of the Roman army. He issued orders to spare the lives of his enemies, and offered rewards for all captives brought in alive. Even if this be not strictly true, its exaggeration or invention, or even its relation as a praiseworthy act, shows the new spirit which was working in the mind of man (6).

Among the first acts of the sole emperor of the world, was the repeal of all the edicts of Licinius against the Christians, the release of all prisoners from the dungeon or the mine, or the servile and humiliating occupations to which some had been contemptuously condemned in the manufactories conducted by women; the recall of all the exiles; the restoration of all who had been deprived of their rank in the army, or in the civil service; the restitution of all property of which they had been despoiled,—that of the martyrs to the legal heirs, where there were no heirs to the church—that

(1) Vit. Const. ii. 5.

(2) Ὑπαρχοὶς τισιν ὑπισχνομένοις αὐτῷ κρατῆσειν, εἰς ἐλληνισμον ἐτρέπη. Sozomen, i. 7.

Sacrifices and divinations were resorted to, and promised to Licinius universal empire.

(3) Vit. Constant. ii. 4.

(4) Euseb. Vit. Constant. i. 49.

(5) Eusebius declares that he heard this from the lips of Constantine himself. One man, who in his panic gave up the cross to another, was immediately transixed in his flight. No one actually around the cross was wounded.

(6) Vit. Const. ii. 13.

of the churches was not only restored, but the power to receive donations in land, already granted to the Western churches, was extended to the Eastern. The Emperor himself set the example of restoring all which had been confiscated to the state.

Constantine issued two edicts, recounting all these exemptions, restitutions, and privileges—one addressed to the churches, the other to the cities of the East; the latter alone is extant. Its tone might certainly indicate that Constantine considered the contest with Licinius as, in some degree, a war of religion: his own triumph and the fate of his enemies are adduced as unanswerable evidences to the superiority of that God whose followers had been so cruelly persecuted; the restoration of the Christians to all their property and immunities, was an act not merely of justice and humanity, but of gratitude to the Deity.

But Constantine now appeared more openly to the whole world as the head of the Christian community. He sat, not in the Roman senate deliberating on the affairs of the empire, but presiding in a council of Christian bishops, summoned from all parts of the world, to decide, as of infinite importance to the Roman empire, a contested point of the Christian faith. The council was held at Nice, one of the most ancient of the Eastern cities. The transactions of the council, the questions which were agitated before it, and the decrees which it issued, will be postponed for the present, in order that this important controversy, which so long divided Christianity, may be related in a continuous narrative: we pass to the following year.

A. D. 325.  
  
Conduct of  
Constantine to his  
enemies.

Up to this period Christianity had seen much to admire and little that it would venture to disapprove in the public acts, or the domestic character of Constantine. His offences against the humanity of the Gospel would find palliation, or rather vindication and approval, in a warrior and a sovereign. The age was not yet so fully leavened with Christianity, as to condemn the barbarity of that Roman pride, which exposed without scruple the brave captive chieftains of the German tribes in the amphitheatre. Again, after the triumph of Constantine over Maxentius, this bloody spectacle had been renewed at Treves, on a new victory of Constantine over the *Barbarians*. The extirpation of the family of a competitor for the empire would pass as the usual, perhaps the necessary, policy of the times. The public hatred would applaud the death of the voluptuous Maxentius, and that of his family would be the inevitable consequences of his guilt. Licinius had provoked his own fate by resistance to the will of God, and his persecution of the religion of Christ. Nor was the fall of Licinius followed by any general proscription; his son lived for a few years to be the undistinguished victim of a sentence which involved others, in whom the public mind took far deeper interest. Licinius himself was permitted to

live a short time at Thessalonica (1) : it is said by some that his life was guaranteed by a solemn oath, and that he was permitted to partake of the hospitality of the conqueror (2); yet his death, though the brother-in-law of Constantine, was but an expected event (3). The tragedy which took place in the family of Constantine betrayed to the surprised and anxious world, that if his outward demeanour showed respect or veneration for Christianity, its milder doctrines had made little impression on the unsoftened Paganism of his heart.

Crispus, the son of Constantine by Minervina, his first wife, was a youth of high and brilliant promise. In his early years his education had been entrusted to the celebrated Lactantius, and there is reason to suppose that he was imbued by his eloquent preceptor with the Christian doctrines; but the gentler sentiments instilled by the new faith had by no means unnerved the vigour or tamed the martial activity of youth. Had he been content with the calmer and more retiring virtues of the Christian, without displaying the dangerous qualifications of a warrior and a statesman, he might have escaped the fatal jealousy of his father, and the arts which were no doubt employed for his ruin. In his campaign against the Barbarians, Crispus had shown himself a worthy son of Constantine, and his naval victory over the fleet of Licinius had completed the conquest of the empire. The conqueror of Maxentius and of Licinius, the undisputed master of the Roman world, might have been expected to stand superior to that common failing of weak monarchs, a jealous dread of the heir to their throne. The unworthy fears of Constantine were betrayed by an edict, inconsistent with the early promise of his reign. He had endeavoured, soon after his accession, to repress the odious crime of delation; a rescript now appeared, inciting by large reward, and liberal promise of favour, those informations which he had before nobly disdained, and this edict seemed to betray the apprehensions of the government, that some widely ramified and darkly organised conspiracy was afoot. But if such conspiracy existed, it refused, by the secrecy of its own proceedings, to enlighten the public mind.

Rome itself, and the whole Roman world, heard with horror and amazement, that in the midst of the solemn festival, which was celebrating with the utmost splendour the twentieth year of the Em-

A. D. 326.  
Crispus,  
son of  
Constantine.

Death of  
Crispus.  
April, A.D.  
326.

(1) Le Beau (Hist. des Empereurs, i. 220.) recites with great fairness the varying accounts of the death of Licinius, and the motives which are said to have prompted it. But he proceeds to infer that Licinius *must* have been guilty of some new crime, to induce Constantine to violate his solemn oath.

(2) Contra religionem sacramenti Thessalonice privatus occisus est. Eutrop. lib. x.

(3) Eusebius says that he was put to death by the laws of war, and openly approves of his

execution and that of the other enemies of God. Νόμος πολέμου διακρίνας τῇ προεπούσῃ παρεδίδου τιμωρίαν \* \* καὶ ἀπάλλυντο, τὴν προσήκουσαν ὑπέχοντες δίκην, οἱ τῆς θεομαχίας σύμβουλοι. How singularly does this contrast with the passage above ! See p. 388. (Vit. Const. ii. 13.) bigotry and mercy advancing hand in hand—the sterner creed overpowering the gospel.



peror's reign, his eldest son had been suddenly seized, and, either without trial, or after a hurried examination, had been transported to the shore of Istria, and perished by an obscure death (1). Nor did Crispus fall alone; the young Licinius, the nephew of Constantine, who had been spared after his father's death, and vainly honoured with the title of Cæsar, shared his fate. The sword of justice or of cruelty once let loose, raged against those who were suspected as partisans of the dangerous Crispus, or as implicated in the wide-spread conspiracy, till the bold satire of an eminent officer of state did not scruple, in some lines privately circulated, to compare the splendid but bloody times with those of Nero (2).

Death of  
Fausta.

But this was only the first act of the domestic tragedy; the death of his wife Fausta, the partner of twenty years of wedlock, the mother of his three surviving sons, increased the general horror. She was suffocated in a bath, which had been heated to an insupportable degree of temperature. Many rumours were propagated throughout the empire concerning this dark transaction, of which the real secret was no doubt concealed, if not in the bosom, within the palace of Constantine. The awful crimes which had thrilled the scene of ancient tragedy, were said to have polluted the imperial chamber. The guilty step-mother had either, like Phædra, revenged the insensibility of the youthful Crispus by an accusation of incestuous violence, or the crime, actually perpetrated, had involved them both in the common guilt and ruin. In accordance with the former story, the miserable Constantine had discovered too late the machinations which had stained his hand with the blood of a guiltless son: in the agony of his remorse he had fasted forty days; he had abstained from the use of the bath; he had proclaimed his own guilty precipitancy, and the innocence of his son, by raising a golden statue of the murdered Crispus, with the simple but emphatic inscription, "To my unfortunate son." The Christian mother of Constantine, Helena, had been the principal agent in the detection of the wicked Fausta; it was added, that, independent of her unnatural passion for her step-son, she was found to have demeaned herself to the embraces of a slave.

It is dangerous to attempt to reconcile with probability these extraordinary events, which so often surpass, in the strange reality of their circumstances, the wildest fictions. But according to the ordinary course of things, Crispus would appear the victim of political rather than of domestic jealousy. The innocent Licinius might be an object of suspicion, as implicated in a conspiracy,

(1) Vict. Epit. in Constantino. Eutrop. lib. x. Zosimus, ii. c. 29. Sidonius, v. epist. 8. Of the ecclesiastical historians, Philostorgius (lib. ii. 4.) attributed the death of Crispus to the arts of his stepmother. He adds a strange story, that Constantine was poisoned by his brothers in revenge for the death of Crispus. Sozomen, hile he re-

futes the notion of the connection of the death of Crispus with the conversion of Constantine, admits the fact, l. i. c. 5.

(2) The Consul Albinus,—

Saturni aurea sæcla quis requirit?  
Sunt hæc gemmea sed Neroniana.

Sid. Apoll. v. 8.

against the power but not against the honour of Constantine. The removal of Crispus opened the succession of the throne to the sons of Fausta. The passion of maternal ambition is much more consistent with human nature than the incestuous love of a step-mother, advanced in life, and with many children, towards her husband's son. The guilt of compassing the death of Crispus, whether by the atrocious accusations of a Phædra, or by the more vulgar arts of common court intrigue, might come to light at a later period; and the indignation of the Emperor at having been deluded into the execution of a gallant and blameless son, the desire of palliating to the world and to his own conscience his own criminal and precipitate weakness, by the most unrelenting revenge on the subtlety with which he had been circumvented, might madden him to a second act of relentless barbarity (1).

But at all events the unanimous consent of the Pagan, and most of the Christian authorities, as well as the expressive silence of Eusebius, indicate the unfavourable impression made on the public mind by these household barbarities. But the most remarkable circumstance is, the advantage which was taken of this circumstance by the Pagan party, to throw a dark shade over the conversion of Constantine to the Christian religion. Zozimus has preserved this report; but there is good reason for supposing that it was a rumour, eagerly propagated at the time by the more desponding votaries of Paganism (2). In the deep agony of remorse, Constantine earnestly inquired of the ministers of the ancient religions, whether their lustrations could purify the soul from the blood of a son. The unaccommodating priesthood acknowledged the inefficacy of their rites in a case of such inexpiable atrocity (3), and Constantine remained to struggle with the unappeased and untoned horrors of conscience. An Egyptian, on his journey from Spain, passed through Rome, and being admitted to the intimacy of some of the females about the court, explained to the Emperor that the religion of Christ possessed the power of cleansing the soul from all sin. From that time Constantine placed himself entirely in the hands of the Christians, and abandoned altogether the sacred rites of his ancestors. If Constantine at this time

Pagan account of this event.

(1) Gibbon has thrown doubts on the actual death of Fausta, vol. iii. p. 110.

(2) See Heyne's note on this passage of Zosimus.

(3) According to Sozomea, whose narrative, as Heyne observes (note on Zosimus, p. 552.), proves that this story was not the invention of Zosimus, but rather the version of the event current in the Pagan world; it was not a Pagan priest, but a Platonic philosopher, named Sopater, who thus denied the efficacy of any rite or ceremony to wash the soul clean from filial blood. It is true that neither the legal ceremonial of Paganism, nor the principles of the later

Platonism, could afford any hope or pardon to the murderer. Julian (speaking of Constantine in Cæsar) insinuates the facility with which Christianity admitted the *μικροβρύτος*, as well as other atrocious delinquents, to the divine forgiveness.

The bitterness with which the Pagan party judged of the measures of Constantine, is shown in the turn which Zosimus gives to his edict discouraging divination. "Having availed himself of the advantages of divination, which had predicted his own splendid successes, he was jealous lest the prophetic art should be equally prodigal of its glorious promises to others."

had been long an avowed and sincere Christian, this story falls to the ground; but if, according to our view, there was still something of ambiguity in the favour shown by Constantine to Christianity, if it still had something rather of the sagacious statesman than of the serious proselyte, there may be some slight groundwork of truth in this fiction. Constantine may have relieved a large portion of his subjects from grievous oppression, and restored their plundered property; he may have made munificent donations to maintain their ceremonial; he may have permitted the famous *labarum* to exalt the courage of his Christian soldiery; he may have admitted their representatives to his court, endeavoured to allay their fierce feuds in Africa, and sanctioned by his presence the meeting of the Council of Nice to decide on the new controversy, which began to distract the Christian world; he may have proclaimed himself, in short, the worshipper of the Christians' God, whose favourites seemed likewise to be those of fortune, and whose enemies were devoted to ignominy and disaster (such is his constant language) (1): but of the real character and the profounder truths of the religion he may still have been entirely, or, perhaps, in some degree disdainfully, ignorant: the lofty indifference of the emperor predominated over the obedience of the proselyte towards the new faith.

But it was now the *man*, abased by remorse, by the terrors of conscience, it may be by superstitious horrors, who sought some refuge against the divine Nemesis, the avenging furies, which haunted his troubled spirit. It would be the duty as well as the interest of an influential Christian to seize on the mind of the royal proselyte, while it was thus prostrate in its weakness, to enforce more strongly the *personal* sense of religion upon the afflicted soul. And if the Emperor was understood to have derived the slightest consolation under this heavy burthen of conscious guilt from the doctrines of Christianity; if his remorse and despair were allayed or assuaged; nothing was more likely than that Paganism, which constantly charged Christianity with receiving the lowest and most depraved of mankind among its proselytes, should affect to assume the tone of superior moral dignity, to compare its more uncompromising moral austerity with the easier terms on which Christianity *appeared* to receive the repentant sinner. In the bitterness of wounded pride and interest at the loss of an imperial worshipper, it would revenge itself by ascribing his change exclusively to the worst hour of his life, and to the least exalted motive. It is a greater difficulty, that, subsequent to this period the mind of

(1) It is remarkable in all the proclamations and documents which Eusebius assigns to Constantine, some even written by his own hand, how almost exclusively he dwells on this worldly superiority of the God adored by the Christians

over those of the Heathen, and the visible *temporal* advantages which attend on the worship of Christianity. His own victory and the disasters of his enemies are his conclusive evidences of Christianity.



Constantine appears to have relapsed in some degree to its imperfectly unpaganised Christianity. His conduct became ambiguous as before, floating between a decided bias in favour of Christianity, and an apparent design to harmonise with it some of the less offensive parts of Heathenism. Yet it is by no means beyond the common inconsistency of human nature, that, with the garb and attitude, Constantine should throw off the submission of a penitent. His mind released from its burthen, might resume its ancient vigour, and assert its haughty superiority over the religious, as well as over the civil allegiance of his subjects. A new object of ambition was dawning on his mind; a new and absorbing impulse was given to all his thoughts—the foundation of the second Rome, the new imperial city on the Bosphorus.

Nor was this sole and engrossing object altogether unconnected with the sentiments which arose out of this dark transaction. Rome had become hateful to Constantine; for whether on this point identifying herself with the Pagan feeling, and taunting the crime of the Christian with partial acrimony, or pre-surmising the design of Constantine to reduce her to the second city of the empire, Rome assumed the unwonted liberty of insulting the Emperor. The pasquinade which compared his days to those of Nero was affixed to the gates of the palace; and so galling was the insolence of the populace, that the Emperor is reported to have consulted his brothers on the expediency of calling out his guards for a general massacre. Milder councils prevailed; and Constantine took the more tardy, but more deep-felt revenge, of transferring the seat of empire from the banks of the Tiber to the shores of the Bosphorus.

### CHAPTER III.

#### FOUNDATION OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

THE foundation of Constantinople marks one of the great periods of change in the annals of the world. Both its immediate (1) and its remoter connection with the history of Christianity, are among those results which contributed to its influence on the destinies of mankind. The removal of the seat of empire from Rome might, indeed, at first appear to strengthen the decaying cause of Paganism. The senate became the sanctuary, the aristocracy of Rome, in general, the unshaken adherents of the ancient reli-

Founda-  
tion of  
Constan-  
tinople.

(1) Constantine seized the property of some of the temples, for the expense of building Constantinople, but did not change the established worship; so says Libanius.

Τῆς κατὰ νόμους δὲ θεοκρατίας ἐκινή-  
σεν αὐτὴ ἐν. vol. ii. p. 162.

gion. But its more remote and eventual consequences were favourable to the consolidation and energy of the Christian power in the West. The absence of a secular competitor allowed the papal authority to grow up and to develop its secret strength. By the side of the imperial power, perpetually contrasted with the pomp and majesty of the throne, constantly repressed in its slow but steady advancement to supremacy, or obliged to contest every point with a domestic antagonist, the Pope would hardly have gained more political importance than the Patriarch of Constantinople. The extinction of the Western empire, which indeed had long held its court in Milan or Ravenna, rather than in the ancient capital, its revival only beyond the Alps, left all the awe which attached to the old Roman name, or which followed the possession of the imperial city, to gather round the tiara of the pontiff. In any other city the Pope would in vain have asserted his descent from St. Peter; the long habit of connecting together the name of Rome with supreme dominion, silently co-operated in establishing the spiritual despotism of the Papal see.

Favour-  
able to  
Christia-  
nity.

Even in its more immediate influence, the rise of Constantinople was favourable to the progress of Christianity. It removed the seat of government from the presence of those awful temples, to which ages of glory had attached an inalienable sanctity, and with which the piety of all the greater days of the republic had associated the supreme dominion and the majesty of Rome. It broke the last link which combined the pontifical and the imperial character. The Emperor of Constantinople, even if he had remained a Pagan, would have lost that power which was obtained over men's minds by his appearing in the chief place in all the religious pomps and processions, some of which were as old as Rome itself. The senate, and even the people, might be transferred to the new city; the deities of Rome clung to their native home, and would have refused to abandon their ancient seats of honour and worship.

Constanti-  
nople a  
Christian  
city.

Constantinople arose, if not a Christian, certainly not a Pagan city. The new capital of the world had no ancient deities, whose worship was inseparably connected with her more majestic buildings and solemn customs. The temples of old Byzantium had fallen with the rest of the public edifices, when Severus, in his vengeance, razed the rebellious city to the ground. Byzantium had resumed sufficient strength and importance to resist a siege by Constantine himself in the earlier part of his reign; and some temples had reappeared during the reconstruction of the city (1). The fanes of the Sun, of the Moon, and of Aphrodite, were permitted to stand in the Acropolis, though deprived of their revenues (2). That of Castor

(1) There is a long list of these temples in V. Hammer's *Constantinopel und die Bosporus*, i. p. 189, etc. Many of them are named in Gyllius, but it does not seem clear at what period they

ceased to exist. The *Paschal Chronicle*, referred to by V. Hammer, says nothing of their conversion into churches by Constantine.

(2) Malala. *Constantinus*, x.

and Pollux formed part of the Hippodrome, and the statues of those deities who presided over the games, stood undisturbed till the reign of Theodosius the Younger (1).

Once determined to found a rival Rome on the shores of the Bosphorus, the ambition of Constantine was absorbed by this great object. No expense was spared to raise a city worthy of the seat of empire; no art or influence to collect inhabitants worthy of such a city. Policy forbade any measure which would alienate the minds of any class or order, who might add to the splendour or swell the population of Byzantium, and policy was the ruling principle of Constantine in the conduct of the whole transaction. It was the Emperor whose pride was now pledged to the accomplishment of his scheme, with that magnificence which became the second founder of the empire, not the exclusive patron of one religious division of his subjects. Constantinople was not only to bear the name, it was to wear an exact resemblance of the elder Rome. The habitations of men, and the public buildings for business, for convenience, for amusement, or for splendour, demanded the first care of the founder. The imperial palace arose, in its dimensions and magnificence equal to that of the older city. The skill of the architect was lavished on the patrician mansions, which were so faithfully to represent to the nobles, who obeyed the imperial invitation, the dwellings of their ancestors in the ancient Capitol, that their wondering eyes could scarcely believe their removal; their Penates might seem to have followed them (2). The senate-house, the Augusteum, was prepared for their counsels. For the mass of the people, markets and fountains and aqueducts, theatres and hippodromes, porticoes, basilicæ and forums, rose with the rapidity of enchantment. One class of buildings alone was wanting. If some temples were allowed to stand, it is clear that no new sacred edifices were erected to excite and gratify the religious feelings of the Pagan party (3), and the building of the few churches which are ascribed to the pious munificence of Constantine, seems slowly to have followed the extraordinary celerity with which the city was crowded with civil edifices. A century after, a century during which Christianity had been recognised as the religion of the empire, the metropolis contained only fourteen churches, one for each of its wards or divisions. Yet Constantine by no means neglected those

Building  
of the city.

(1) Zosimus, ii. 31.

(2) Sozomen, ii. 3. In the next reign, however, Themistius admits the reluctance of the senators to remove: *προτοῦ μὲν ὑπ' ἀνάγκης ἐτιμᾶτο ἡ γερουσία, καὶ ἡ τιμὴ τιμαρίας ἔδοκει μὴδ' ὅτι οὐδὲν διαφέρειν*. Orat. Protrep. p. 57.

(3) Of the churches built by Constantine, one was dedicated to S. Sophia (the supreme Wisdom), the other to Eirene, Peace: a philosophic Pagan might have admitted the propriety of de-

dicating temples to each of these abstract names. The consecrating to individual saints was of a later period. Soz. ii. 3. The ancient Temple of Peace, which afterwards formed part of the Santa Sophia, was appropriately transformed into a Christian church. The Church of the Twelve Apostles appears, from Eusebius (Vit. Const. iv. 58.), to have been built in the last year of his reign and of his life, as a burial place for himself and his family. Sozomen, indeed, says that Constantine embellished the city *πολλοῖς καὶ μεγίστοις εὐκταφείοις οἰκίαις*



measures which might connect the new city with the religious feelings of mankind. Heaven inspired, commanded, sanctified the foundation of the second Rome. The ancient ritual of Roman Paganism contained a solemn ceremony, which dedicated a new city to the protection of the Deity.

Ceremo-  
nial of the  
founda-  
tion.

An imperial edict announced to the world, that Constantine, by the command of God, had founded the eternal city. When the Emperor walked, with a spear in his hand, in the front of the stately procession which was to trace the boundaries of Constantinople, the attendants followed in wonder his still advancing footsteps, which seemed as if they never would reach the appointed limit. One of them, at length, humbly inquired, how much farther he proposed to advance. "When he that goes before me," replied the Emperor, "shall stop." But however the Deity might have intimated his injunctions to commence the work, or whatever the nature of the invisible guide which, as he declared, thus directed his steps, this vague appeal to the Deity would impress with the same respect all, and by its impartial ambiguity offend none, of his subjects. In earlier times the Pagans would have bowed down in homage before this manifestation of the nameless tutelar deity of the new city; at the present period they had become familiarised, as it were, with the concentration of Olympus into one supreme Being (1); the Christians would of course assert the exclusive right of the one true God to this appellation, and attribute to his inspiration and guidance every important act of the Christian Emperor (2).

But if splendid temples were not erected to the decaying deities of Paganism, their images were set up, mingled indeed with other noble works of art, in all the public places of Constantinople. If the inhabitants were not encouraged, at least they were not forbidden to pay divine honours to the immortal sculptures of Phidias and Praxiteles, which were brought from all quarters to adorn the squares and baths of Byzantium. The whole Roman world contributed to the splendour of Constantinople. The tutelar deities of all the cities of Greece (their influence of course much enfeebled by their removal from their local sanctuaries) were assembled. The Minerva of Lyndus, the Cybele of Mount Dindymus, which was said to have been placed there by the Argonauts, the Muses of Helicon, the Amphitrite of Rhodes, the Pan consecrated by united Greece after the defeat of the Persians, the Delphic Tripod. The Dioscuri overlooked the Hippodrome. At each end of the principal forum were

(1) The expression of the Pagan Zosinus shows how completely this language had been adopted by the Heathen: *πᾶς γὰρ χρόνος τῷ Διὶ ἐκράχυν, αἰεὶ τε ἔντι, καὶ ἐσομένῳ*. He is speaking of an oracle, in which the Pagan party discovered a prediction of the future glory

of Byzantium. One letter less would make it the sentence of a Christian appealing to prophecy.

(2) At a later period the Virgin Mary obtained the honour of having inspired the foundation of Constantinople, of which she became the tutelary guardian, I had almost written, deity.

two shrines, one of which held the statue of Cybele, but deprived of her lions and her hands, from the attitude of command distorted into that of a suppliant for the welfare of the city : in the other was the Fortune of Byzantium (1). To some part of the Christian community this might appear to be leading, as it were, the Gods of Paganism in triumph ; the Pagans were shocked on their part by their violent removal from their native fanes, and their wanton mutilation. Yet the Christianity of that age, in full possession of the mind of Constantine, would sternly have interdicted the decoration of a Christian city with these *idols* ; the workmanship of Phidias or of Lysippus would have found no favour, when lavished on images of the Dæmons of Paganism.

The ceremonial of the dedication of the city (2) was attended by still more dubious circumstances. After a most splendid exhibition of chariot games in the Hippodrome, the Emperor moved in a magnificent car through the most public part of the city, encircled by all his guards, in the attire of a religious ceremonial, and bearing torches in their hands. The Emperor himself bore a golden statue of the Fortune of the city in his hands. An imperial edict enacted the annual celebration of this rite. On the birthday of the city, the gilded statue of himself, thus holding the same golden image of Fortune, was annually to be led through the Hippodrome to the foot of the imperial throne, and to receive the adoration of the reigning Emperor. The lingering attachment of Constantine to the favourite superstition of his earlier days, may be traced on still better authority. The Grecian worship of Apollo had been exalted into the Oriental veneration of the Sun, as the visible representative of the Deity ; and of all the statues which were introduced from different quarters, none were received with greater honour than those of Apollo. In one part of the city stood the Pythian, in the other the Sminthian deity (3). The Delphic Tripod, which, according to Zosimus, contained an image of the god, stood upon the column of the three twisted serpents, supposed to represent the mythic Python. But on a still loftier, the famous pillar of porphyry, stood an image in which (if we are to credit modern authority, and the more modern our authority, the less likely is it to have invented so singular a statement) Constantine dared to mingle together the attributes of the Sun, of Christ, and of himself (4). According to one tradition, this pillar was based, as it were, on another superstition. The venerable Palladium itself, surreptitiously conveyed from Rome, was

Statue of  
Constantine.

(1) Euseb. Vit. Const. iii. 54. Sozomen, ii. 5. Codinus, or C. P. 30—62. Le Beau, i. 305.

Eusebins would persuade his readers that these statues were set up in the public places to excite the general contempt. Zosimus admits with bitterness that they were mutilated from want of respect to the ancient religion, ii. 31. Compare Soer. Ec. Hist. 1—16.

(2) Paschal Chronicle, p. 529. edit. Bonn.

(3) Euseb. Vit. Const. iii. 54.

(4) The author of the Antiq. Constantinop. apud Banduri. See Von Hammer, Constantinopel und die Bosporus, i. 162. Philostorgius says that the Christians worshipped this image, ii. 17.

buried beneath it, and thus transferred the eternal destiny of the old to the new capital. The pillar, formed of marble and of porphyry, rose to the height of 120 feet. The colossal image on the top was that of Apollo, either from Phrygia or from Athens. But the head of Constantine had been substituted for that of the god. The sceptre proclaimed the dominion of the world, and it held in its hand the globe, emblematic of universal empire. Around the head, instead of rays, were fixed the nails of the true cross. Is this Paganism approximating to Christianity, or Christianity degenerating into Paganism? Thus Constantine, as founder of the new capital, might appear to some still to maintain the impartial dignity of Emperor of the world, presiding with serene indifference over the various nations, orders, and religious divisions which peopled his dominions; admitting to the privileges and advantages of citizens in the new Rome all who were tempted to make their dwelling around her seat of empire.

Progress  
of Christi-  
anity.

Yet, even during the reign of Constantine, no doubt, the triumphant progress of Christianity tended to efface or to obscure these lingering vestiges of the ancient religion. If here and there remained a shrine or temple belonging to Polytheism, built in proportion to the narrow circuit and moderate population of old Byzantium, the Christian churches, though far from numerous, were gradually rising, in their dimensions more suited to the magnificence and populousness of the new city, and in form proclaiming the dominant faith of Constantinople. The Christians were most likely to crowd into a new city; probably their main strength still lay in the mercantile part of the community: interest and religion would combine in urging them to settle in this promising emporium of trade, where their religion, if it did not reign alone and exclusive, yet maintained an evident superiority over its decaying rival. The old aristocracy, who were inclined to Christianity, would be much more loosely attached to their Roman residences, and would be most inclined to obey the invitation of the Emperor, while the large class of the indifferent would follow at the same time the religious and political bias of the sovereign. Where the attachment to the old religion was so slight and feeble, it was a trifling sacrifice to ambition or interest to embrace the new; particularly where there was no splendid ceremonial, no connexion of the priestly office with the higher dignity of the state; nothing, in short, which could enlist either old reverential feelings, or the imagination, in the cause of Polytheism. The sacred treasures, transferred from the Pagan temples to the Christian city, sank more and more into national monuments, or curious remains of antiquity; their religious significance was gradually forgotten; they became, in the natural process of things, a mere collection of works of art.

In other respects Constantinople was not a Roman city. An am-



phitheatre, built on the restoration of the city after the siege of Severus, was permitted to remain, but it was restricted to exhibitions of wild beasts; the first Christian city was never disgraced by the bloody spectacle of gladiators (1). There were theatres indeed, but it may be doubted whether the noble religious drama of Greece ever obtained popularity in Constantinople. The chariot race was the amusement which absorbed all others; and to this, at first, as it was not necessarily connected with the Pagan worship, Christianity might be more indulgent. How this taste grew into a passion, and this passion into a frenzy, the later annals of Constantinople bear melancholy witness. Beset with powerful enemies without, oppressed by a tyrannous government within, the people of Constantinople thought of nothing but the colour of their faction in the Hippodrome, and these more engrossing and maddening contentions even silenced the animosity of religious dispute.

The Amphitheatre.

During the foundation of Constantinople, the Emperor might appear to the Christians to have relapsed from the head of the Christian division of his subjects, into the common sovereign of the Roman world. In this respect, his conduct did not ratify the promise of his earlier acts in the East. He had not only restored Christianity, depressed first by the acts of Maximin, and afterwards by the violence of Licinius, but in many cases he had lent his countenance, or his more active assistance, to the rebuilding their churches on a more imposing plan. Yet, to all outward appearance, the world was still Pagan: every city seemed still to repose under the tutelary gods of the ancient religion: every where the temples rose above the buildings of men: if here and there a Christian church, in its magnitude, or in the splendour of its architecture, might compete with the solid and elegant fanes of antiquity, the Christians had neither ventured to expel them from their possessions, or to appropriate to their own use those which were falling into neglect or decay. As yet there had been no invasion but on the opinions and moral influence of Polytheism. The temples, indeed, of Pagan worship, though subsequently, in some instances, converted to Christian uses, were not altogether suited to the ceremonial of Christianity (2). The Christians might look on their stateliest buildings with jealousy—hardly with envy. Whether raised on the huge substructures, and in the immense masses of the older Asiatic style, as at Baalbec, or the original Temple at Jerusalem; whether built on the principles of Grecian art, when the secret of vaulting over a vast building seems to have been unknown; or, after the general introduction of the arch

Ancient temples.

(1) An edict of Constantine (Cod. Theod. xv. 12.), if it did not altogether abolish these sanguinary shows, restricted them to particular occasions. *Cruenta spectacula in otio civili, et domesticâ quiete non placent. Criminals were to be sent to the mines. But it should seem that captives taken in war might still be exposed in*

the amphitheatre. In fact these bloody exhibitions resisted some time longer the progress of Christian humanity.

(2) Compare an excellent memoir by M. Quatremère de Quincy on the means of lighting the ancient temples (*Mem. de l'Institut. iii. 171.*), and Hope on Architecture.

by the Romans had allowed the roof to spread out to ampler extent, —still the actual enclosed temple was rarely of great dimensions (1). The largest among the Greeks were hypæthral, open to the sky (2). If we judge from the temples crowded together about the Forum, those in Rome contributed to the splendour of the city rather by their number than their size. The rites of Polytheism, in fact, collected together their vast assemblages, rather as spectators than as worshippers (3). The altar itself, in general, stood in the open air, in the court before the temple, where the smoke might find free vent, and rise in its grateful odour to the heavenly dwelling of the Gods. The body of the worshippers, therefore, stood in the courts, or the surrounding porticoes. They might approach individually, and make their separate libation or offering, and then retire to a convenient distance, where they might watch the movements of the ministering priest, receive his announcement of the favourable or sinister signs discovered in the victim, or listen to the hymn, which was the only usual form of adoration or prayer. However Christianity might admit gradations in its several classes of worshippers, and assign its separate station according to the sex, or the degree of advancement in the religious initiation; however the penitents might be forbidden, until reconciled with the church, or the catechumens before they were initiated into the community, to penetrate beyond the outer portico, or the inner division in the church; yet the great mass of a Christian congregation must be received within the walls of the building; and the service consisting not merely in ceremonies performed by the priesthood, but in prayers, to which all present were expected to respond, and in oral instruction; the actual edifice therefore required more ample dimensions.

Basilicas.

In many towns there was another public building, the Basilica, or Hall of Justice (4), singularly adapted for the Christian worship. This was a large chamber, of an oblong form, with a plain flat exterior wall. The pillars, which in the temples were without, stood within the basilica; and the porch, or that which in the temple was an outward portico, was contained within the basilica. This hall was thus divided by two rows of columns into a central avenue, with two side aisles. The outward wall was easily pierced for windows, without damaging the symmetry or order of the architecture. In the one the male, in the other the female, appellants to

(1) M. de Quincy gives the size of some of the ancient temples: Juno et Agrigentum 116 (Paris) feet; Coucord, 120; Pastum, 119; Theseus, 100; Jupiter at Olympia, or Minerva at Athens, 220—230; Jupiter at Agrigentum, 322; Selinus, 320; Ephesus, 350; Apollo Dindymus at Miletus, 360, p. 195.

(2) The real hypæthral temples were to particular divinities: Jupiter Fulgurator, Cælum, Sol, Luna.

(3) Eleusis, the scene of the mysteries, of all the ancient temples had the largest nave; it was

turbæ theatralis capacissimum. Vitruv. vii. "Ὀχλον θεάτρου διέξασθαι δυνάμενον. Strabo.

(4) La Basilique fut l'édifice des anciens, qui convint à la célébration de ses mystères. La vaste capacité de son intérieur, les divisions de son plan, les grandes ouvertures, qui introduisaient de toutes parts la lumière dans son enceinte, le tribunal qui devint la place des célébrans et du chœur, tout se trouva en rapport avec les pratiques du nouveau culte. Q. de Quincy, p. 173. See Hope on Architecture, p. 87.

justice waited their turn (1). The three longitudinal avenues were crossed by one in a transverse direction, elevated a few steps, and occupied by the advocates, notaries, and others employed in the public business. At the farther end, opposite to the central avenue, the building swelled out into a semi-circular recess, with a ceiling rounded off; it was called *absis* in the Greek, and in Latin *tribunal*. Here sate the magistrate with his assessors, and hence courts of justice were called tribunals.

The arrangement of this building coincided with remarkable propriety with the distribution of a Christian congregation (2). The sexes retained their separate places in the aisles; the central avenue became the nave, so called from the fanciful analogy of the church to the ship of St. Peter. The transept, the *Βήμα*, or *choros*, was occupied by the inferior clergy and the singers (3). The bishop took the throne of the magistrate, and the superior clergy ranged on each side on the seats of the assessors.

Before the throne of the bishop, either within or on the verge of the recess, stood the altar. This was divided from the nave by the cancelli, or bars, from whence hung curtains, which, during the celebration of the communion, separated the participants from the rest of the congregation.

As these buildings were numerous, and attached to every imperial residence, they might be bestowed at once on the Christians, without either interfering with the course of justice, or bringing the religious feelings of the hostile parties into collision (4). Two, the Sessorian and the Lateran, were granted to the Roman Christians by Constantine. And the basilica appears to have been the usual form of building in the West, though, besides the porch, connected with, or rather included within, the building, which became the Narthex, and was occupied by the catechumens and the penitents, and in which stood the piscina, or font of baptism—there was in general an outer open court, surrounded with colonnades. This, as we have seen in the description of the church at Tyre, was general in the East, where the churches retained probably more of the templar form; while in Constantinople, where they were buildings raised from the ground, Constantine appears to have followed the form of the basilica.

By the consecration of these basilicas to the purposes of Christian worship, and the gradual erection of large churches in many of the Eastern cities, Christianity began to assume an outward form and dignity commensurate with its secret moral influence.

Relative position of Christianity and Paganism.

(1) According to Bingham (lviii. c. 3.), the women occupied galleries in each aisle above the men. This sort of separation may have been borrowed from the synagogue; probably the practice was not uniform.

(2) Some few churches were of an octagonal form; some in that of a cross. See Bingham, l. viii. c. 3.

(3) Apost. Const. l. ii. c. 57.

(4) There were eighteen at Rome; many of these basilicae had become exchanges, or places for general business. Among the Roman basilicae P. Vietor reckons, the Basilica Argentariorum. Ciampini, tom. i. p. 8.

Some basilicae were of a very large size. One is described by the younger Pliny, in which 180 judges were seated, with a vast multitude of advocates and auditors. Plin. Epist. vi. 33.



In imposing magnitude, if not in the grace and magnificence of its architecture, it rivalled the temples of antiquity. But as yet it had neither the power, nor, probably, the inclination, to array itself in the spoils of Paganism. Its aggression was still rather that of fair competition, than of hostile destruction. It was content to behold the silent courts of the Pagan fanes untrodden but by a few casual worshippers; altars without victims, thin wreaths of smoke rising where the air used to be clouded with the reek of hecatombs; the priesthood murmuring in bitter envy at the throngs which passed by the porticoes of their temples towards the Christian church. The direct interference with the freedom of Pagan worship seems to have been confined to the suppression of some of those Eastern rites which were offensive to public morals. Some of the Syrian temples retained the obscene ceremonial of the older Nature worship. Religious prostitution, and other monstrous enormities, appeared under the form of divine adoration. The same rites, which had endangered the fidelity of the ancient Israelites, shocked the severe purity of the Christians. A temple in Syria of the female principle of generation, which the later Greeks identified with their Aphrodite, was defiled by these unspeakable pollutions; it was levelled to the ground by the Emperor's command; the recesses of the sacred grove laid open to the day, and the rites interdicted (1). A temple of Æsculapius at Ægæ in Cilicia fell under the same proscription. The miraculous cures, pretended to be wrought in this temple, where the suppliants passed the night, appears to have excited the jealousy of the Christians; and this was, perhaps, the first overt act of hostility against the established Paganism (2). In many other places the frauds of the priesthood were detected by the zealous incredulity of the Christians; and Polytheism, feebly defended by its own party, at least left to its fate by the government, assailed on all quarters by an active and persevering enemy, endured affront, exposure, neglect, if not with the dignified patience of martyrdom, with the sullen equanimity of indifference.

Palestine itself, and its capital, Jerusalem, was an open province, of which Christianity took entire and almost undisputed possession. Paganism, in the adjacent regions, had built some of its most splendid temples; the later Roman architecture at Gerasa, at Petra, and at Baalbec, appears built on the massive and enormous foundations of the older native structures. But in Palestine proper it had made no strong settlement. Temples had been raised by Hadrian, in his new city, on the site of Jerusalem. One dedicated to Aphrodite occupied the spot, which Christian tradition or later invention asserted to be the sepulchre of Christ (3). The prohibition issued by

Temples  
suppress-  
ed.

(1) Euseb. Vit. Const. iii. 55.

(2) Ibid. iii. 56.

(3) This temple was improbably said to have

been built on this spot by Hadrian to insult the Christians; but Hadrian's hostility was against the rebellious Jews, not against the Christians.

Hadrian against the admission of the Jews into the Holy City, doubtless was no longer enforced; but, though not forcibly depressed by public authority, Judaism itself waned, in its own native territory, before the ascendancy of Christianity.

Christi-  
anity at  
Jerusalem.

It was in Palestine that the change which had been slowly working into Christianity itself, began to assume a more definite and apparent form. The religion, re-issued as it were from its cradle, in a character, if foreign to its original simplicity, singularly adapted to achieve and maintain its triumph over the human mind. It no longer confined itself to its purer moral influence; it was no more a simple, spiritual faith, despising all those accessories which captivate the senses, and feed the imagination with new excitement. It no longer disdained the local sanctuary, nor stood independent of those associations with place, which became an universal and spiritual religion. It began to have its hero-worship, its mythology; and to crowd the mind with images, of a secondary degree of sanctity, but which enthralled and kept in captivity those who were not ripe for the pure moral conception of the Deity, and the impersonation of the Godhead in Jesus Christ. It was, as might not unreasonably be anticipated, a female, the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, who gave, as it were, this new colouring to Christian devotion. In Palestine indeed, where her pious activity was chiefly employed, it was the memory of the Redeemer himself which hallowed the scenes of his life and death to the imagination of the believer. Splendid churches arose over the place of his birth at Bethlehem; that of his burial, near the supposed Calvary; that of his ascension on the Mount of Olives. So far the most spiritual piety could not hesitate to proceed; to such natural and irresistible claims upon its veneration no Christian heart could refuse to yield. The cemeteries of their brethren had, from the commencement of Christianity, exercised a strong influence over the imagination. They had frequently, in times of trial, been the only places of religious assemblage. When hallowed to the feelings by the remains of friends, of bishops, of martyrs, it was impossible to approach them without the profoundest reverence; and the transition from reverence to veneration, to adoration, was too easy and imperceptible to awaken the jealousy of that exclusive devotion due to God and the Redeemer. The sanctity of the place where the Redeemer was supposed to have been laid in the sepulchre, was still more naturally and intimately associated with the purest sentiments of devotion.

But the next step, the discovery of the true cross, was more important. It materialised, at once, the spiritual worship of Christianity. It was reported throughout wondering Christendom, that tradition or a vision, having revealed the place of the Holy Sepulchre, the fane of Venus had been thrown down by the imperial command, excavations had been made, the Holy Sepulchre had

come to light, and with the Sepulchre three crosses, with the inscription originally written by Pilate in three languages over that of Jesus. As it was doubtful to which of the crosses the tablet with the inscription belonged, a miracle decided to the perplexed believers the claims of the genuine cross (1). The precious treasure was divided; part, enshrined in a silver case, remained at Jerusalem, from whence pilgrims constantly bore fragments of the still vegetating wood to the West, till enough was accumulated in the different churches to build a ship of war. Part was sent to Constantinople: the nails of the passion of Christ were turned into a bit for the war-horse of the Emperor, or, according to another account, represented the rays of the sun around the head of his statue.

Churches  
built in  
Palestine.

A magnificent church, called at first the Church of the Resurrection (Anastasis), afterwards that of the Holy Sepulchre, rose on the sacred spot, hallowed by this discovery; in which from that time a large part of the Christian world has addressed its unquestioning orisons. It stood in a large open court, with porticoes on each side, with the usual porch, nave, and choir. The nave was inlaid with precious marbles; and the roof, overlaid with gold, showered down a flood of light over the whole building; the roofs of the aisles were likewise overlaid with gold. At the farther end arose a dome supported by twelve pillars, in commemoration of the Twelve Apostles; the capitals of these were silver vases. Within the church was another court, at the extremity of which stood the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, lavishly adorned with gold and precious stones, as it were to perpetuate the angelic glory which streamed forth on the day of the Resurrection (2).

Another sacred place was purified by the command of Constantine, and dedicated to Christian worship. Near Hebron there was the celebrated oak or terebinth tree of Mambre, which tradition pointed out as the spot where the angels appeared to Abraham. It is singular that the Heathen are said to have celebrated religious rites at this place, and to have worshipped the celestial visitants of Abraham. It was likewise, as usual in the East, a celebrated emporium of commerce. The worship may have been like that at the Caaba of Mecca before the appearance of Mahomet, for the fame of Abraham seems to have been preserved among the Syrian and Arabian tribes, as well as the Jews. It is remarkable that, at a later period, the Jews and Christians are said to have met in amicable

(1) The excited state of the Christian mind, and the tendency to this materialisation of Christianity, may be estimated by the undoubting credulity with which they entertained the improbable notion, that the crosses were buried with our Saviour, not only that on which he suffered, but those of the two thieves also. From

the simple account of the burial in the Gospels, how singular a change to that of the discovery of the cross in the ecclesiastical historians. Socrates. i. 17. Sozomen, ii. 1. Theodoret, i. 18.

(2) Eusebius, Vit. Constant. iii. 29. et seq.; this seems to be the sense of the author.



devotion, and offered their common incense and suspended their lights in the church erected over this spot by the Christian Emperor (1).

## CHAPTER IV.

### TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

BUT it was as arbiter of religious differences, as presiding in their solemn councils, that Constantine appeared to the Christians the avowed and ostensible head of their community. Immediately after his victory over Licinius, Constantine had found the East, no less than the West, agitated by the dissensions of his Christian subjects. He had hoped to allay the flames of the Donatist schism, by the consentient and impartial authority of the Western churches. A more extensive, if as yet less fiercely agitated, contest disturbed the Eastern provinces. Outward peace seemed to be restored only to give place to intestine dissension. We must reascend the course of our History for several years, in order to trace in one continuous narrative the rise and progress of the Trinitarian Controversy. This dissension had broken out soon after Constantine's subjugation of the East; already, before the building of Constantinople, it had obtained full possession of the public mind, and the great Council of Nice, the first real senate of Christendom, had passed its solemn decree. The Donatist schism was but a local dissension: it raged, indeed, with fatal and implacable fury; but it was almost entirely confined to the limits of a single province. The Trinitarian controversy was the first dissension which rent asunder the whole body of the Christians, arrayed in almost every part of the world two hostile parties in implacable opposition, and, at a later period, exercised a powerful political influence on the affairs of the world. How singular an illustration of the change already wrought in the mind of man by the introduction of Christianity. Questions which, if they had arisen in the earlier period of the world, would have been limited to a priestly caste; if in Greece, would have been confined to the less frequented schools of Athens or Alexandria, and might have produced some intellectual excitement among the few who were conversant with the higher philosophy; now agitated the populace of great cities, and occupied the councils of princes; and, at a later period, determined the fate of kingdoms and the sovereignty of great part of Europe (2). It ap-

Trinitarian controversy.

(1) Antoninus in Itinerario. See Heinichen; Note on Euseb. Vit. Const. iii. 53.

(2) For instance, when the savage orthodoxy

of the Franks made the more refined Arianism of the Visigoths a pretext for hostile invasion.

pears still more extraordinary, since this controversy related to a purely speculative tenet. The disputants of either party might possibly have asserted the superior tendency of each system to enforce the severity of Christian morals, or to excite the ardour of Christian piety; but they appear to have dwelt little, if at all, on the practical effects of the conflicting opinions. In morals, in manners, in habits, in usages, in church-government, in religious ceremonial, there was no distinction between the parties which divided Christendom. The Gnostic sects inculcated a severer asceticism, and differed, in many of their usages, from the general body of the Christians: the Donatist factions commenced at least with a question of church discipline, and almost grew into a strife for political ascendancy: the Arians and Athanasians first divided the world on a pure question of a faith. From this period we may date the introduction of rigorous articles of belief, which required the submissive assent of the mind to every word and letter of an established creed, and which raised the slightest heresy of opinion into a more fatal offence against God, and a more odious crime in the estimation of man, than the worst moral delinquency, or the most flagrant deviation from the spirit of Christianity.

Origin of  
the con-  
troversy.

The Trinitarian controversy was the natural, though tardy, growth of the Gnostic opinions: it could scarcely be avoided when the exquisite distinctness and subtlety of the Greek language were applied to religious opinions of an Oriental origin. Even the Greek of the New Testament retained something of the significant and reverential vagueness of Eastern expression. This vagueness, even philosophically speaking, may better convey to the mind those mysterious conceptions of the Deity which are beyond the province of reason, than the anatomical precision of philosophic Greek. The first Christians were content to worship, with undefining fervour, the Deity as revealed in the Gospel. They assented to, and repeated with devout adoration, the words of the Sacred Writings, or those which had been made use of from the Apostolic age; but they did not decompose them, or, with nice and scrupulous accuracy, appropriate peculiar terms to each manifestation of the Godhead. It was the great characteristic of the Oriental theologies, as described in a former chapter, to preserve the primal and parental Deity at the greatest possible distance from the material creation. This originated in the elementary tenet of the irreclaimable evil of matter. In the present day, the more rational believer labours under the constant dread, if not of materialising, of humanising too much the Great Supreme. A certain degree of indistinctness appears inseparable from that vastness of conception, which arises out of the more extended knowledge of the works of the Creator. A more expanding and comprehensive philosophy increases the distance between the Omnific First Cause and the race of man. All that

defines seems to limit and circumscribe the Deity. Yet in thus reverentially repelling the Deity into an unapproachable sphere, and investing him, as it were, in a nature absolutely unimaginable by the mind; in thus secluding him from the degradation of being vulgarised, if the expression may be ventured, by profane familiarity, or circumscribed by the narrowness of the human intellect, God is gradually subtilised and sublimated into a being beyond the reach of devotional feelings, almost superior to adoration. There is in mankind, and in the individual man, on the one hand, an intellectual tendency to refine the Deity into a mental conception; and, on the other, an instinctive counter-tendency to impersonate him into a material, and, when the mind is ruder and less intellectual, a mere human being. Among the causes which have contributed to the successful promulgation of Christianity, and the maintenance of its influence over the mind of man, was the singular beauty and felicity with which its theory of the conjunction of the divine and human nature, each preserving its separate attributes, on the one hand, enabled the mind to preserve inviolate the pure conception of the Deity, on the other, to approximate it, as it were, to human interests and sympathies. But this is done rather by a process of instinctive feeling than by strict logical reasoning. Even here, there is a perpetual strife between the intellect, which guards with jealousy the divine conception of the Redeemer's nature; and the sentiment, or even the passion, which so draws down the general notion to its own capacities, so approximates and assimilates it to its own ordinary sympathies, as to absorb the Godhead in the human nature.

Constant struggle between the intellectual and devotional conception of the Deity.

The Gnostic systems had universally admitted the seclusion of the primal Deity from all intercourse with matter; that intercourse had taken place, through a derivative and intermediate being, more or less remotely proceeding from the sole fountain of Godhead. This, however, was not the part of Gnosticism, which was chiefly obnoxious to the general sentiments of the Christian body. Their theories about the malignant nature of the Creator; the identification of the God of the Jews with this hostile being; the Docetism which asserted the unreality of the Redeemer—these points, with their whole system of the origin of the worlds and of mankind, excited the most vigorous and active resistance. But when the wilder theories of Gnosticism began to die away, or to rank themselves under the hostile standard of Manicheism; when their curious cosmogonical notions were dismissed, and the greater part of the Christian world began to agree in the plain doctrines of the eternal supremacy of God; the birth, the death, the resurrection of Christ, as the Son of God; the effusion of the Holy Spirit,—questions began to arise as to the peculiar nature and relation between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In all the systems a binary, in most



a triple, modification of the Deity was admitted. The Logos, the Divine Word or Reason, might differ, in the various schemes, in its relation to the parental Divinity and to the universe; but it had this distinctive and ineffaceable character, that it was the Mediator, the connecting link between the unseen and unapproachable world and that of man. This Platonism, if it may be so called, was universal. It differed, indeed, widely in most systems from the original philosophy of the Athenian sage; it had acquired a more Oriental and imaginative cast. Plato's poetry of words had been expanded into the poetry of conceptions. It may be doubted whether Plato himself impersonated the Logos, the Word or Reason, of the Deity; with him it was rather an attribute of the Godhead. In one sense it was the chief of these archetypal ideas, according to which the Creator framed the universe; in another, the principle of life, motion, and harmony which pervaded all things. This Platonism had gradually absorbed all the more intellectual class; it hovered over, as it were, and gathered under its wings all the religions of the world. It had already modified Judaism; it had allied itself with the Syrian and Mithriac worship of the Sun, the visible Mediator, the emblem of the Word; it was part of the general Nature worship; it was attempting to renew Paganism, and was the recognised and leading tenet in the higher Mysteries. Disputes on the nature of Christ were indeed coeval with the promulgation of Christianity. Some of the Jewish converts had never attained to the sublimer notion of his mediatorial character; but this disparaging notion, adverse to the ardent zeal of the rest of the Christian world, had isolated this sect. The imperfect Christianity of the Ebionites had long ago expired in an obscure corner of Palestine. In all the other divisions of Christianity, the Christ had more or less approximated to the office and character of this being, which connected mankind with the Eternal Father.

Alexandria, the fatal and prolific soil of speculative controversy, where speculative controversy was most likely to madden into furious and lasting hostility, gave birth to this new element of disunion in the Christian world. The Trinitarian question, indeed, had already been agitated within a less extensive sphere. Noetus, an Asiatic, either of Smyrna or Ephesus, had dwelt with such exclusive zeal on the unity of the Godhead, as to absorb, as it were, the whole Trinity into one undivided and undistinguished Being. The one supreme and impassible Father united to himself the man Jesus, whom he had created, by so intimate a conjunction, that the divine unity was not destroyed. His adversaries drew the conclusion, that, according to this blaspheming theory, the Father must have suffered on the cross, and the ignominious name of Patripassians adhered to the few followers of this unprosperous sect.

Sabellianism had excited more attention. Sabellius was an African

Contro-  
versy com-  
mences at  
Alexan-  
dria.

Noetus.

Sabellian-  
ism.

of the Cyrenaic province. According to his system it was the same Deity, under different forms, who existed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. A more modest and unoffending Sabellianism might, perhaps, be imagined in accordance with modern philosophy. The manifestations of the same Deity, or rather of his attributes, through which alone the Godhead becomes comprehensible to the human mind, may have been thus successively made in condescension to our weakness of intellect. It would be the same Deity, assuming, as it were, an objective form, so as to come within the scope of the human mind; a real difference, as regards the conception of man, perfect unity in its subjective existence. This, however, though some of its terms may appear the same with the Sabellianism of antiquity, would be the Trinitarianism of a philosophy unknown at this period. The language of the Sabellians implied, to the jealous ears of their opponents, that the distinction between the persons of the Trinity was altogether unreal. While the Sabellian party charged their adversaries with a Heathen Tritheistic worship, they retorted by accusing Sabellianism of annihilating the separate existence of the Son and the Holy Ghost. But Sabellianism had not divided Christianity into two irreconcilable parties. Even now, but for the commanding characters of the champions who espoused each party, the Trinitarian controversy might have been limited to a few provinces, and become extinct in some years. But it arose, not merely under the banners of men endowed with those abilities which command the multitude; it not merely called into action the energies of successive disputants, the masters of the intellectual attainments of the age,—it appeared at a critical period, when the rewards of success were more splendid, the penalty upon failure proportionately more severe. The contest was now not merely for a superiority over a few scattered and obscure communities, it was agitated on a vaster theatre, that of the Roman world; the proselytes whom it disputed were sovereigns; it contested the supremacy of the human mind, which was now bending to the yoke of Christianity. It is but judging on the common principles of human nature to conclude, that the grandeur of the prize supported the ambition and inflamed the passions of the contending parties, that human motives of political power and aggrandisement mingled with the more spiritual influences of the love of truth, and zeal for the purity of religion.

The doctrine of the Trinity, that is, the divine nature of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, was acknowledged by all. To each of these distinct and separate beings, both parties ascribed the attributes of the Godhead, with the exception of self-existence, which was restricted by the Arians to the Father. Both admitted the anti-mundane Being of the Son and the Holy Spirit. But, according to the Arian, there was a time, before the commencement of

Trinitarianism.

the ages, when the Parent Deity dwelt alone in undeveloped, undivided unity. At this time, immeasurably, incalculably, inconceivably remote, the majestic solitude ceased, the divine unity was broken by an act of the sovereign Will, and the only begotten Son, the image of the Father, the Viceregent of all the divine power, the intermediate Agent in all the long subsequent work of creation, *began to be* (1).

Such was the question which led to all the evils of human strife—hatred, persecution, bloodshed. But, however profoundly humiliating this fact in the history of mankind, and in the history of Christianity an epoch of complete revolution from its genuine spirit, it may fairly be inquired, whether this was not an object more generous, more unselfish, and at least as wise, as many of those motives of personal and national advantage and aggrandisement, or many of those magic words, which, embraced by two parties with blind and unintelligent fury, have led to many of the more disastrous and sanguinary events in the annals of man. It might, indeed, have been supposed that a profound metaphysical question of this kind, would have been far removed from the passions of the multitude; but with the multitude, and that multitude often comprehends nearly the whole of society, it is the passion which seeks the object, not the object which, of its own exciting influence, inflames the passion. In fact religion was become the one dominant passion of the whole Christian world, and every thing allied to it, or rather, in this case, which seemed to concern its very essence, could no longer be agitated with tranquillity, or debated with indifference. The Pagan party, miscalculating the inherent strength of the Christian system, saw, no doubt, in these disputes the seeds of the destruction of Christianity. The contest was brought on the stage at Alexandria (2); but there was no Aristophanes, or rather the serious and unpoetic time could not have produced an Aristophanes, who might at once show that he understood, while he broadly ridiculed, the follies of his adversaries. The days even of a Lucian were past (3). Discord, which at times is fatal to a nation or to a sect, seems at others, by the animating excitement of rivalry, the stirring collision of hostile energy, to favour the development of moral strength. The Christian republic, like Rome when it was rent asunder by domestic factions, calmly proceeded in her conquest of the world.

The plain and intelligible principle which united the opponents of Arius was, no doubt, a vague, and, however perhaps overstrained, neither ungenerous nor unnatural jealousy, lest the dignity of the Redeemer, the object of their grateful adoration, might

(1) Compare the letter of Arius, in Theodoret, lib. i. c. v.

(2) Euseb. Vit. Constant. ii. 61. Socrates, i. 6.

(3) The Philopatris, of whatever age it may be, is clearly not Lucian's; and, at most, only slightly touches these questions.



in some way be lowered by the new hypothesis. The divinity of the Saviour seemed inseparably connected with his co-equality with the Father; it was endangered by the slightest concession on this point. It was their argument, that if the Son was not coeval in existence with the Father, he must have been created, and created out of that which was not pre-existent. But a created being must be liable to mutability; and it was asserted in the public address of the Patriarch of Alexandria, that this fatal consequence had been extorted from an unguarded Arian, if not from Arius himself, — that it was *possible* that the Son might have fallen, like the great rebellious angel (1).

The patriarch of this important see, the metropolis of Egypt, was named Alexander. It was said that Arius, a presbyter of acute powers of reasoning, popular address, and blameless character, had declined that episcopal dignity (2). The person of Arius (3) was tall and graceful; his countenance calm, pale, and subdued; his manners engaging; his conversation fluent and persuasive. He was well acquainted with human sciences; as a disputant subtle, ingenious, and fertile in resources. His enemies add to his character, which themselves have preserved, that this humble and mortified exterior concealed unmeasured ambition; that his simplicity frankness, and honesty only veiled his craft and love of intrigue; that he appeared to stand aloof from all party, merely that he might guide his cabal with more perfect command, and agitate and govern the hearts of men. Alexander was accustomed, whether for the instruction of the people, or the display of his own powers, to debate in public these solemn questions on the nature of the Deity, and the relation of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Father. According to the judgment of Arius, Alexander fell inadvertently into the heresy of Sabellianism, and was guilty of confounding in the simple unity of the Godhead the existence of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (4).

Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria.  
Arius.

The intemperate indignation of Alexander at the objections of Arius, betrayed more of the baffled disputant, or the wounded pride of the dignitary, than the serenity of the philosopher, or the meekness of the Christian. He armed himself ere long in all the terrors of his office, and promulgated his anathema in terms full of exaggeration and violence. “The impious Arius the forerunner of Antichrist, had dared to utter his blasphemies against the divine Redeemer. Arius, expelled from Alexandria, not indeed before his opinions had spread through the whole of Egypt and Libya (5),

(1) Epiphan. Hær. 69. tom. i. p. 723—727.

(2) See Philostorgius (the Arian writer). Theodoret, on the other hand, says, that he brought forward his opinions from envy at the promotion of Alexander, i. 2. See the Epistle of Alexander, in Socrat. Hist. Eccl. i. 6.

(3) Arius is said, in his early life, to have been implicated in the sect of the Miletians, which

seems to have been rather a party than a sect. They were the followers of Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis, who had been deposed for having sacrificed during the persecution. Yet this sect or party lasted for more than a century.

(4) Socrates, i. 5, 6.

(5) The account of Sozomen says, that Alexander at first vacillated, but that he afterwards

retired to the more congenial atmosphere of Syria (1). There, his vague theory caught the less severely reasoning, and more imaginative minds of the Syrian bishops (2): the lingering Orientalism prepared them for this kindred hypothesis. The most learned, the most pious, the most influential, united themselves to his party. The chief of these were the two prelates named Eusebius, — one the ecclesiastical historian, the other, bishop of the important city of Nicomedia. Throughout the East, controversy was propagated with earnest rapidity. It was not repressed by the attempts of Licinius to interrupt the free intercourse between the Christian communities, and his prohibition of the ecclesiastical synods. The ill smothered flame burst into tenfold fury on the re-union of the East to the empire of Constantine. The interference of the Emperor was loudly demanded to allay the strife which distracted the Christendom of the East. The behaviour of Constantine was regulated by the most perfect equanimity, or, more probably, guided by some counsellor of mild and more humane Christianity: his letter of peace was, in its spirit, a model of temper and conciliation (3). With profound sorrow he had heard that his designs for the unity of the empire, achieved by his victory over Licinius, as well as for the unity of the faith, had been disturbed by this unexpected contest. His impartial rebuke condemned Alexander for unnecessarily agitating such frivolous and unimportant questions, and Arius for not suppressing, in prudent and respectful silence, his objections to the doctrine of the Patriarch. It recommended the judicious reserve of the philosophers, who had never debated such subjects before an ignorant and uneducated audience, and who differed without acrimony on such profound questions. He entreated them, by the unanimous suppression of all feelings of unhallowed animosity

Letter of  
Constantine.

commanded Arius to adopt his opinions: τὸν Ἀρειὸν ἰμοίως φρονεῖν ἐκέλευσε. Sozomen acknowledges the high character of many of the Arian bishops, πλείστους ἀγαθοῦ βίου προσχήματι, σεμνοῦς, καὶ πιθανότητι λόγου δεινούς, συλλαμβανομένους τοῖς ἀμφὶ τὸν Ἀρειὸν.

(1) It was during his retreat that he wrote his famous *Thalia*, the gay and convivial title of which is singularly out of keeping with the grave and serious questions then in agitation. His adversaries represent this as a poem full of profane wit, and even of indecency. It was written in the same measure, and to the same air, with the Sotadic verses, which were proverbial for their grossness even among the Greeks. It is difficult to reconcile this account of the *Thalia* with the subtle and politic character which his enemies attributed to Arius, still less to the protection of such men as Eusebius of Nicomedia, and the other Syrian prelates. Arius, likewise, composed hymns, in accordance with his opinions, to be chaunted by sailors, those who worked at the mill, or travellers. Songs of this kind abounded in the Greek poetry; each

art and trade had its song\*, and Arius may have intended no more than to turn this popular practice in favour of Christianity, by substituting sacred for profane songs, which, of course, would be imbued with his own opinions. Might not the *Thalia* have been written in the same vein, and something in the same spirit with which a celebrated modern humorist and preacher adapted hymns to some of the most popular airs, and declared that the devil ought not to have all the best tunes. The general style of Arius is said to have been soft, effeminate, and popular. The specimen from the *Thalia* (in Athens, Or. i. Cont. Ar. c. 5.) is very loose and feeble Greek. Yet it is admitted that he was an expert dialectician; and no weak orator would have maintained so long such a contest.

(2) The bishops of Ptolemais, in the Pentapolis, and Theonas of Marmarica, joined his party. The females were inclined to his side. Seven hundred virgins of Alexandria, and of the Mareotic nome, owned him for their spiritual teacher. Compare the letter of Alexander in Theodoret, ch. iv.

(3) See the letter in Euseb. Vit. Constant. ii. 64—72.

\* Hgen, de Scoliis Poesi. p. xiii.

sity, to restore his cheerful days and undisturbed nights. Of the same faith, the same form of worship, they ought to meet in amicable synod, to adore their common God in peaceful harmony, and not fall into discord as to accuracy of expression on these most minute of questions; to enjoy and allow freedom in the sanctuary of their own minds, but to remain united in the common bonds of Christian love (1).

It is probable that the hand of Hosius, bishop of Cordova in Spain, is to be traced in that royal and Christian letter. The influence of Hosius was uniformly exercised in this manner. Wherever the edicts of the government were mild, conciliating, and humane, we find the Bishop of Cordova. It is by no means an improbable conjecture of Tillemont, that he was the Spaniard who afterwards, in the hour of mental agony and remorse, administered to the Emperor the balm of Christian penitence.

Hosius was sent to Egypt, as the imperial Commissioner, to assuage the animosity of the distracted church. But religious strife, in Egypt more particularly, its natural and prolific soil, refused to listen to the admonitions of Christian wisdom or imperial authority. Eusebius compares the fierce conflict of parties—bishops, with bishops, people with people—to the collision of the Symplegades (2). From the mouths of the Nile to the Cataracts, the divided population tumultuously disputed the nature of the divine unity (3).

A general council of the heads of the various Christian communities throughout the Roman empire was summoned by the imperial mandate, to establish, on the consentient authority of assembled Christendom, the true doctrine on these contested points, and to allay for ever this propensity to hostile disputation. The same paramount tribunal was to settle definitively another subordinate question, relating to the time of keeping the Easter festival. Many of the eastern communities shocked their more scrupulous brethren by following the calculations, and observing the same sacred days with impious and abhorred Jews; for the further we advance in the Christian history, the estrangement of the Christians from the Jew darkens more and more into absolute antipathy.

In the month of May on June (the 20th) (4) in the year 325, A. D. 325. met the great council of Nice. Not half a century before, the Christian bishops had been only marked as the objects of the most cruel insult and persecution. They had been chosen, on account of their eminence in their own communities, as the peculiar victims of the

Council of  
Nice.

Contro-  
versy  
about  
keeping  
Easter.

(1) "Α δ' ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐλαχίστων τούτων  
ζητήσεων ἐν ἀλλήλοις ἀκριβολογείσθαι,  
κἂν μὴ πρὸς μίαν γνώμην συμφέρεσθαι,  
μένειν εἰς ὁλοκλήρου προσηύκει, τῷ τῆς  
διανοίας ἀπορήντων τιρούμενοι. Euseb.  
Vit. Const. ii. 71.

(2) Vit. Const. iii. 4.

(3) Ἐρίδες ἐν ἐκάσῃ πολεὶ καὶ κόμῃ,  
καὶ μάχαι περὶ τῶν θεῶν δογμάτων  
ἐρῶνοντο. Theodoret. i. 6.

(4) One of these dates rests on the authority  
of Socrates, xiii. 26.; the other of the Paschal  
Chronicle, p. 282. Compare Pagi, p. 404.



stern policy of the government. They had been driven into exile, set to work in the mines, exposed to every kind of humiliation and suffering, from which some had in mercy been released by death. They now assembled, under the imperial sanction, a religious senate from all parts at least of the eastern world, for Italy was represented only by two presbyters of Rome; Hosius appeared for Spain, Gaul, and Britain. The spectacle was altogether new to the world. No wide-ruling sovereign would ever have thought of summoning a conclave of the sacerdotal orders of the different religions; a synod of philosophers to debate some grave metaphysical or even political question was equally inconsistent with the ordinary usages and sentiments of Grecian or Roman society.

The public establishment of post-horses was commanded to afford every facility, and that gratuitously, for the journey of the assembling bishops (1). Vehicles or mules were to be provided, as though the assembly were an affair of state, at the public charge. At a later period, when councils became more frequent, the Heathen historian complains, that the public service was impeded, and the post-horses harassed and exhausted by the incessant journeying to and fro of the Christian delegates to their councils. They were sumptuously maintained during the sitting at the public charge (2).

Number of  
bishops  
present.

Above three hundred bishops were present, presbyters, deacons, acolyths without number (3), a considerable body of laity: but it was the presence of the Emperor himself which gave its chief weight and dignity to the assembly. Nothing could so much confirm the Christians in the opinion of their altered position, or declare to the world at large the growing power of Christianity, as this avowed interest taken in their domestic concerns; or so tend to raise the importance attached even to the more remote and speculative doctrines of the new faith, as this unprecedented condescension, so it would seem to the Heathen, on the part of the Emperor. The council met, probably, in a spacious basilica (4). Eusebius describes the scene as himself deeply impressed with its solemnity. The assembly sat in profound silence, while the great officers of state and other dignified persons (there was no armed guard) entered the hall, and awaited in proud and trembling expectation the appearance of the Emperor of the world in a Christian council. Constantine at length entered; he was splendidly attired; the eyes of the bishops were dazzled by the gold and precious stones upon his raiment. The majesty of his person and the modest dignity of his demeanour

First meetings of the council.

(1) Euseb. Vit. Const. iii. 6. Theodoret. i. 7.

(2) Euseb. iii. 9.

(3) There was one bishop from Persia, one from Scythia. Eusebius states the number at 250; that in the text is on the authority of Theodoret, and of the numbers said to have signed the creed.

(4) There is a long note in Heinichen's Euse-

b. bius to prove that they did not meet in the palace, but in a church; as though the authority of their proceedings depended upon their place of assembly. It was probably a basilica, or hall of justice; the kind of building usually made over by the government for the purposes of Christian worship; and, in general, the model of the earliest Christian edifices.

heightened the effect : the whole assembly rose to do him honour ; he advanced to a low golden seat prepared for him, and did not take his seat (it is difficult not to suspect Eusebius of highly colouring the deference of the Emperor), till a sign of permission had been given by the bishops (1). One of the leading prelates (probably Eusebius the historian) commenced the proceedings with a short address, and a hymn to the Almighty God. Constantine then delivered an exhortation to unity in the Latin language, which was interpreted to the Greek bishops. His admonition seems at first to have produced no great effect. Mutual accusation, defence, and recrimination prolonged the debate (2). Constantine seems to have been present during the greater part of the sittings, listening with patience, softening asperities, countenancing those whose language tended to peace and union, and conversing familiarly, in the best Greek he could command, with the different prelates. The courtly flattery of the council might attribute to Constantine himself what was secretly suggested by the Bishop of Cordova. For powerful and comprehensive as his mind may have been, it is incredible that a man so educated, and engaged during the early period of his life with military and civil affairs, could have entered, particularly being imperfectly acquainted with the Greek language, into these discussions on religious metaphysics.

Behaviour  
of Con-  
stantine.

The council sate for rather more than two months (3). Towards the close, Constantine, on the occasion of the commencement of the twentieth year of his reign (4), condescended to invite the bishops to a sumptuous banquet. All attended, and as they passed through the imperial guard, treated with every mark of respect, they could not but call to mind the total revolution in their circumstances. Eusebius betrays his transport by the acknowledgment that they could scarcely believe that it was a reality, not a vision ; to the grosser conception of those who had not purified their minds from the millennial notions, the banquet seemed the actual commencement of the kingdom of Christ.

The Nicene creed was the result of the solemn deliberation of the assembly. It was conceived with some degree of oriental indefiniteness, harmonised with Grecian subtlety of expression. The vague and somewhat imaginative fulness of its original eastern terms was not too severely limited by the fine precision of its definitions. One fatal word broke the harmony of assent with which it was received by the whole council. Christ was declared *Homooousios*, of the same

Nicene  
creed.

(1) Οὐ πρότερον ἢ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους πινεύσαι. See also Socrates, i. 8. In Theodoret (i. 7.), this has grown into his humbly asking permission to sit down.

(2) Constantine burned the libels which the bishops had presented against each other. Many of these (the ecclesiastical historian intimates) arose out of private animosities. Socrates, i. 6.

(3) According to some, two months and eleven days, to others, two months and six days.

(4) This seems to reconcile the difficulty stated by Heinichen. The 20th year of Constantine's reign began the 8th Cal. Aug. A.D. 325. Eusebius uses the inaccurate word ἐπληροῦτο. Vit. Const. iii. 14.

*substance* with the Father (1), and the undeniable, if perhaps inevitable ambiguity of this single term, involved Christianity in centuries of hostility. To one party it implied absolute identity, and was therefore only ill-disguised Sabellianism; to the other it was essential to the co-equal and co-eternal dignity of the three persons in the Godhead. To some of the Syrian bishops it implied or countenanced the material notion of the Deity (2). It was, it is said by one ecclesiastical historian, a battle in the night, in which neither party could see the meaning of the other (3).

Three hundred and eighteen bishops confirmed this creed by their signatures; five alone still contested the single expression, the Homousion: Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nice, Theonas of Marmarica, Maris of Chalcedon, and Eusebius of Cæsarea. Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis were banished. Eusebius of Cæsarea, after much hesitation, consented to subscribe, but sent the creed into his diocese with a comment, explanatory of the sense in which he understood the contested word. His chief care was to guard against giving the slightest countenance to the material conception of the Deity. Two only withstood with uncompromising resistance the decree of the council. The solemn anathema of this Christian senate was pronounced against Arius and his adherents; they were banished by the civil power, and they were especially interdicted from disturbing the peace of Alexandria by their presence (4).

Peace might seem to be restored; the important question set at rest by the united authority of the Emperor, and a representative body which might fairly presume to deliver the sentiments of the

(1) Athanasius himself allowed that the bishops who deposed Paul of Samosata, were justified in rejecting the word *ομοούσιον*, because they understood it in a material or corporeal sense. But the privilege allowed to those who had died in orthodox reputation was denied to the Arians and semi-Arians: de Synodis, Athanas. Oper. i. p. 759. It is impossible to read some pages of this treatise without the unpleasant conviction, that Athanasius was determined to make out the Arians to be in the wrong.

(2) Μῆτε γὰρ δύνασθαι τὴν αὐλον καὶ νοεῖν καὶ ἀσώματον οὖσιν, σωματικὸν τι πάθος ὑφίστασθαι. This is the language of Eusebius.

Φασι δὲ ὁμῶς περὶ τούτου, ὡς ἄρα θέλων ὁ Θεὸς τὴν γεννητὴν κτίσας φύσιν, ἐπεὶ δὴ ἑώρα μὴ δυναμένην αὐτὴν μετασχεῖν τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς ἀκράτου, καὶ τῆς παρ' αὐτοῦ δημιουργίας, ποιεῖ καὶ κτίζει πρῶτως μόνος μόνον ἓνα, καὶ καλεῖ τούτον υἱὸν καὶ λόγον. ἵνα τοῦτου μέσου γενομένου, οὕτως λοιπὸν καὶ τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι δυναθῇ. ταῦτα οὐ μόνον εἰρήκασιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ γράφει τετολιμνηκασιν Εὐσέβιος τε, καὶ Ἀρειὸς καὶ ὁ εὖσας Ἀστέριος.

Athan. Orat. ii. c. 24. Compare Möbler (a learned and strongly orthodox Roman Catholic writer), Athanasius der Grösse, b. i. p. 195. Möbler but dimly sees the Gnostic or Oriental origin of this notion, which lies at the bottom of Arianism.

(3) This remarkable sentence does credit to the judgment and impartiality of Socrates: Νυκτομαχίας δὲ οὐδὲν ἀπέιχε τὰ γιγνομένα, οὔτε γὰρ ἀλλήλους ἐφαίνοντο νοοῦντες, ἀρ' ὅν ἀλλήλους ἐλαττωμένον ὑπελάμβανον· οἱ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ ὁμοουσίου τὴν λέξιν ἐκκλίνοντες τὴν Σαβελλίου καὶ Μοντανῶ δόξαν εἰσηγεῖσθαι αὐτὴν τοῦ προσδεχομένου ἐνόμιζον· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐλαττωμένους ἐκάλουν, ὡς ἀναιροῦντες τὴν ὑπαρξίν τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ· οἱ δὲ πάλιν τῷ ὁμοουσίῳ προσκείμενοι πολυθεΐαν εἰσαγεῖν τοὺς ὑτέρους νομίζοντες, ὡς Ἑλληνισμὸν εἰσαγόντας ἐξέτραποντο. C. 23.

(4) In one passage in the De Synodis, Athanasius accused not only the Arian but the semi-Arian party, Eusebius as well as Arius, of something like Socinianism,

Ὡς ἔστιν υἱὸς ὁμοῖος πατρί, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν συμφωνίαν λόγων καὶ τῆς διδασκαλίας. (p. 766. Athan. Oper. i.)

Five  
recusants.

Banish-  
ment of  
Arius.



whole Christian world. But the Arians were condemned, not convinced; discomfited, not subdued (1). Rather more than two years elapsed, eventful in the private life of Constantine, but tranquil in the history of the Christian church. The imperial assessor in the Christian council had appeared in the West under a different character, as the murderer of his son and of his wife. He returned to the East, determined no more to visit the imperial city, where, instead of the humble deference with which all parties courted his approbation, he had been unable to close his ears against the audacious and bitter pasquinade which arraigned his cruelty to his own family. His return to the East, instead of overawing the contending factions into that unity, which he declared to be the dearest wish of his heart, by his own sudden change of conduct, was the signal for the revival of the fiercest contentions. The Christian community was now to pay a heavy penalty for the pride and triumph with which they had hailed the interference of the Emperor in their religious questions. The imperial decisions had been admitted by the dominant party, when on their own side, to add weight to the decree of the council: at least they had applauded the sentence of banishment pronounced by the civil power against their antagonists; that authority now assumed a different tone, and was almost warranted, by their own admission, in expecting the same prompt obedience. The power which had exiled, might restore the heretic to his place and station. Court influence, however obtained through court intrigue, or from the caprice of the ruling sovereign, by this fatal, perhaps inevitable step, became the arbiter of the most vital questions of Christian faith and discipline; and thus the first precedent of a temporal punishment for an ecclesiastical offence was a dark prognostic, and an example, of the difficulties which would arise during the whole history of Christianity, when the communities, so distinctly two when they were separate and adverse, became one by the identification of the church and the state. The restoration of a banished man to the privileges of a citizen by the civil power, seemed to command his restoration to religious privileges by the ecclesiastical authority (2).

Change in  
the opi-  
nions of  
Constan-  
tine.

A. D. 320.  
336.

The Arian party gradually grew into favour. A presbyter of Arian sentiments had obtained complete command over the mind of Constantia, the sister of Constantine. On her dying bed she entreated him to reconsider the justice of the sentence against that innocent, as she declared, and misrepresented man. Arius could not believe the sudden reverse of fortune; and not till he received a pressing letter from Constantine himself, did he venture to leave his place of exile. A person of still greater importance was at the same time

(1) The writings of Arius and his followers were condemned to be burned. If we are to believe Sozomen (which, I confess, that I am disinclined to do), the concealment of such heretical

works was made a capital offence! E. H. Lib. i. c. 21.

(2) Soer. i. 25, 26. Soz. ii. 27.

Eusebius  
of Nico-  
media.

A. D. 327.

reinstated in the imperial favour. Among the adherents of the Arian form, perhaps the most important was Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia. A dangerous suspicion that he had been too closely connected with the interests of Licinius during the recent struggle for empire, had alienated the mind of Constantine, and deprived Eusebius of that respectful attention which he might have commanded by his station, ability, and experience. With Theognis, Bishop of Nice, his faithful adherent in opinion and in fortune, he had been sent into exile; it is remarkable that the prelates of these two sees, the most important in that part of Asia, should have concurred in these views. The exiled prelates, in their petition for reinstatement in their dioceses, declared (and, notwithstanding the charge of falsehood which their opponents to the present day do not scruple to make, would they have ventured in a public document addressed to Constantine to misstate a fact so notorious?) they solemnly protested that they had not refused their signatures to the Nicene creed, but only to the anathema pronounced against Arius and his followers. "Their obstinacy arose not from want of faith, but from excess of charity." They returned in triumph to their dioceses, and ejected the bishops who had been appointed in their place. No resistance appears to have been made. But the Arians were not content with their peaceable re-establishment in their former station. However they might attempt to harmonise their doctrines with the belief of their adversaries, by their vindictive aggression on the opposite party, they belied their pretensions to moderation and the love of peace. Eusebius, whom Constantine had before publicly denounced in no measured terms, grew rapidly into favour. The complete dominion, which from this time he appears to have exercised over the mind of Constantine, confirms the natural suspicion that the opinions of the Emperor were by no means formed by his own independent judgment, but entirely governed by the Christian teacher who might obtain his favour. Eusebius seems to have succeeded to the influence exercised with so much wisdom and temper by Hosius of Cordova. He became Bishop of Constantinople, and was the companion of Constantine in his visits to Jerusalem (1); and the high estimation in which the Emperor held Eusebius of Cæsarea, according to the statements made, and the documents ostentatiously preserved by that writer in his ecclesiastical history, could not but contribute to the growing ascendancy of Arianism. They were in possession of some of the most important dioceses in Asia; they were ambitious of establishing their supremacy in Antioch.

A. D. 328.  
Conduct of  
the Arian  
prelates in  
Antioch.

The suspicious brevity with which Eusebius glides over the early part of this transaction, which his personal vanity could not allow him to omit, confirms the statement of their adversaries, as to the

(1) Theodoret, i. 2.

unjustifiable means employed by the Arians to attain this object. Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis passed through Antioch on their way to Jerusalem. On their return, they summoned Eustathius, the Bishop of Antioch, whose character had hitherto been blameless, to answer before a hastily assembled council of bishops, on two distinct charges of immorality and heresy. The unseemly practice of bringing forward women of disreputable character to charge men of high station in the church with incontinency, formerly employed by the Heathens to calumniate the Christians, was now adopted by the reckless hostility of Christian faction. The accusation of a prostitute against Eustathius, of having been the father of her child, is said afterwards to have been completely disproved. The heresy with which Eustathius was charged, was that of Sabelianism, the usual imputation of the Arians against the Trinitarians of the opposite creed. Two Arian bishops having occupied the see of Antioch, but, for a very short time, an attempt was made to remove Eusebius of Cæsarea to that diocese, no doubt by the high reputation of his talents, to overawe or to conciliate the Eustathian party. Eusebius, with the flattering approbation of the Emperor, declined the dangerous post. Eustathius was deposed, and banished, by the imperial edict, to Thrace; but the attachment, at least of a large part, of the Christian population of Antioch refused to acknowledge the authority of the tribunal, or the justice of the sentence. The city was divided into two fierce and hostile factions—they were on the verge of civil war—and Antioch, where the Christians had first formed themselves into a separate community, but for the vigorous interference of the civil power, and the timely appearance of an imperial commissioner, might have witnessed the first blood shed, at least in the East, in a Christian quarrel.

It is impossible to calculate how far the authority and influence of the Syrian bishops, with the avowed countenance of the Emperor (for Constantius, the son of Constantine, was an adherent of the Arian opinions), might have subdued the zeal of the orthodox party. It is possible that, but for the rise of one inflexible and indomitable antagonist, the question might either have sunk to rest, or the Christian world acquiesced, at least the East, in a vague and mitigated Arianism.

Athanasius had been raised by the discernment of Alexander to a station of confidence and dignity. He had filled the office of secretary to the Alexandrian prelate. In the Council of Nice he had borne a distinguished part, and his zeal and talents designated him at once as the head of the Trinitarian party. On the death of Alexander, the universal voice of the predominant anti-Arians demanded the elevation of Athanasius. In vain he attempted to conceal himself, and to escape the dangerous honour. At thirty years of age, Athanasius was placed on the episcopal throne of the see, which

Athana-  
sius.



A. D. 326.

ranked with Antioch, and afterwards with Constantinople, as the most important spiritual charge in the East (1).

The imperial mandate was issued to receive Arius and his followers within the pale of the Christian communion (2). But Constantine found, to his astonishment, that an imperial edict, which would have been obeyed in trembling submission from one end of the Roman empire to the other, even if it had enacted a complete political revolution, or endangered the property and privileges of thousands, was received with deliberate and steady disregard by a single Christian bishop. During two reigns, Athanasius contested the authority of the Emperor. He endured persecution, calumny, exile; his life was frequently endangered in defence of one single tenet, and that, it may be permitted to say, the most purely intellectual, and apparently the most remote from the ordinary passions of man: he confronted martyrdom, not for the broad and palpable distinction between Christianity and Heathenism, but for fine and subtle expressions of the Christian creed (3). He began and continued the contest not for the toleration, but for the supremacy of his own opinions.

Charges  
against  
Athanasius.

Neither party, in truth, could now yield without the humiliating acknowledgment that all their contest had been on unimportant and unessential points. The passions and the interests, as well as the conscience, were committed in the strife. The severe and uncompromising temper of Athanasius, no doubt, gave some advantage to his jealous and watchful antagonists. Criminal charges began to multiply against a prelate who was thus fallen in the imperial favour (4). They were assiduously instilled into the ears of Constantine; yet the extreme frivolousness of some of these accusations, and the triumphant refutation of the more material charges, before a tribunal of his enemies, establish, undeniably, the unblemished virtue of Athanasius (5). He was charged with taxing the city to provide linen vestments for the clergy; and with treasonable correspondence with an enemy of the Emperor. Upon this accu-

(1) The Arians asserted this election to have been carried by the irregular violence of a few bishops, contrary to the declared suffrages of the majority.

(2) Athanas. *Apol. contra Ar. Sez.* ii. 22.

(3) I am not persuaded, either by the powerful eloquence of Athanasius himself, or by his able modern apologist, Möhler, that the opinions, at least of the Syrian semi-Arians, were so utterly irreconcilable with the orthodoxy of Athanasius, or likely to produce such fatal consequences to the general system of Christianity as are extorted from them by the keen theological precision of Athanasius.

(4) Theodoret mentions one of these customary charges of licentiousness, in which a woman of bad character accused Athanasius of violating her chastity. Athanasius was silent, whilst one of his friends, with assumed indignation demanded, "Do you accuse me of this crime?"

"Yes," replied the woman, supposing him to be Athanasius, of whom she was ignorant, "you were the violator of my chastity." *L. i. c. 30.*

(5) It is remarkable how little stress is laid on the persecutions which Athanasius is accused of having carried on through the civil authority. *Accusatus præterea est de injuriis, violentiis, cæde, atque ipsâ episcoporum interfectione. Quique etiam diebus sacratissimis paschæ tyrannico more sævienti, Ducibus atque Comitibus jactatus: quique propter ipsam aliquos in custodia recludebant, aliquos vero verberibus flagellisque vexebant, cæteros diversis tormentis ad communionem ejus sacrilegam adigebant.* These charges neither seem to have been pressed nor refuted, as half so important as the act of sacrilege. See the protest of the Arian bishops at Sardica, in Hilarii *Oper. Hist. Fragm.* iii. c. 6. See also the accusations of violence on his return to Alexandria. *Ibid.* 8.

sation he was summoned to Nicomedia, and acquitted by the Emperor himself. He was charged, as having authorised the profanation of the holy vessels, and the sacred books, in a church in the Mareotis, a part of his diocese. A certain Ischyrras had assumed the office of presbyter, without ordination. Macarius, who was sent by Athanasius to prohibit his officiating in his usurped dignity, was accused by Ischyrras of overthrowing the altar, breaking the cup, and burning the Scriptures. It is not impossible that the indiscreet zeal of an inferior may have thought it right to destroy sacred vessels thus profaned by unhallowed hands. But from Athanasius himself the charge recoiled without the least injury. But a darker charge remained behind, comprehending two crimes, probably in those days looked upon with equal abhorrence — magic and murder. The enemies of Athanasius produced a human hand said to be that of Arsenius, a bishop attached to the Meletian heresy, who had disappeared from Egypt, in a suspicious manner. The hand of the murdered bishop had been kept by Athanasius for unhallowed purposes of witchcraft. In vain the emissaries of Athanasius sought for Arsenius in Egypt, though he was known to be concealed in that country; but the superior and one of the monks of a monastery were seized, and compelled to confess that he was still living, and had lain hid in their sanctuary. Yet the charge was not abandoned: it impended for more than two years over the head of Athanasius. A council, chiefly formed of the enemies of Athanasius, was summoned at Tyre. It was intimated to the Alexandrian prelate, that, if he refused to appear before the tribunal, he would be brought by force. Athanasius stood before the tribunal. He was arraigned on this charge; the hand was produced. To the astonishment of the court, Athanasius calmly demanded whether those present were acquainted with the person of Arsenius? He had been well known to many. A man was suddenly brought into the court, with his whole person folded in his mantle. Athanasius uncovered the head of the witness. He was at once recognised as the murdered Arsenius. Still the severed hand lay before them, and the adversaries of Athanasius expected to convict him of having mutilated the victim of his jealousy. Athanasius lifted up the mantle on one side; and showed the right hand; he lifted up the other, and showed the left. In a calm tone of sarcasm he observed, that the Creator had bestowed two hands on man; it was for his enemies to explain how Arsenius had possessed a third (1). A fortunate accident had brought Arsenius to Tyre; he had been discovered by the friends of Athanasius. Though he denied his name, he was known by the bishop of Tyre; and this dramatic scene had been arranged as the most effective means of exposing the malice of the prelate's enemies. His discomfited accusers fled in the confusion.

Synod of  
Tyre.  
A. D. 335.

(1) Theodoret, i. 30.

Athanasius in Constantinople.

New accusations.

Death of Sopater the philosopher.

The implacable enemies of Athanasius were constrained to fall back upon the other exploded charge, the profanation of the sacred vessels by Macarius. A commission of inquiry had been issued, who conducted themselves, according to the statement of the friends of Athanasius, with the utmost violence and partiality. On their report, the bishop of the important city of Alexandria was deposed from his dignity. But Athanasius bowed not beneath the storm. He appears to have been a master in what may be called, without disrespect, theatrical effect. As the Emperor rode through the city of Constantinople, he was arrested by the sudden appearance of a train of ecclesiastics, in the midst of which was Athanasius. The offended Emperor, with a look of silent contempt, urged his horse onward. "God," said the prelate, with a loud voice, "shall judge between thee and me, since you thus espouse the cause of my calumniators. I demand only that my enemies be summoned and my cause heard in the imperial presence." The Emperor admitted the justice of his petition; the accusers of Athanasius were commanded to appear in Constantinople. Six of them, including the two Eusebii, obeyed the mandate. But a new charge, on a subject skilfully chosen to awaken the jealousy of the Emperor, counteracted the influence which might have been obtained by the eloquence or the guiltlessness of Athanasius. It is remarkable, that an accusation of a very similar nature should have caused the capital punishment of the most distinguished among the Heathen philosophic party, and the exile of the most eminent Christian prelate. Constantinople entirely depended for the supply of corn upon foreign importation. One half of Africa, including Egypt, was assigned to the maintenance of the new capital, while the Western division alone remained for Rome. At some period during the later years of Constantine, the adverse winds detained the Alexandrian fleet, and famine began to afflict the inhabitants of the city. The populace was in tumult; the government looked anxiously for means to allay the dangerous ferment. The Christian party had seen with jealousy and alarm the influence which a Heathen philosopher, named Sopater, had obtained over the mind of Constantine (1). Sopater was a native of Apamea, the scholar of Iamblichus. The Emperor took great delight in his society, and was thus in danger of being perverted, if not to Heathenism, to that high Platonic indifferentism, which would leave the two religions on terms of perfect equality. He was seen seated on public occasions by the Emperor's side, and

(1) Zosimus, ii 40.; Sozom., 1—5.; Eunap. in *Ædes*. p. 21—25.; edit. Boissonade. Suidas, voc. *Σώπατρος*. If we are to believe Eunapius, the Christians might reasonably take alarm at the intimacy of Constantine with Sopater: *ὁ μὲν βασιλεὺς ἐαλῶκει τε ὑπ' αὐτῶ καὶ δημοσίᾳ συνέδρον εἶχεν, εἰς τὸν δεξιὸν*

*καθίζων τὸ πόν' ὃ καὶ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἰδεῖν ἄπιστον: οἱ δὲ παραδυναστεύοντες (the Christians, a remarkable admission of their influence,) ῥηγνύμενοι τῷ ἐχθρῷ πρὸς βασιλείαν ἄρτι φιλοσοφῆν μεταμανθάνουσιν.* p. 21.



boasted, it was said, that the dissolution of Heathenism would be arrested by his authority. During the famine the Emperor entered the theatre: instead of the usual acclamations, he was received with a dull and melancholy silence. The enemies of Sopater seized the opportunity of accusing the philosopher of magic: his unlawful arts had bound the winds in the adverse quarter. If the Emperor did not, the populace would readily believe him to be the cause of all their calamities. He was sacrificed to the popularity of the Emperor; the order for his decapitation was hastily issued, and promptly executed.

In the same spirit which caused the death of the Heathen philosopher, Athanasius was accused of threatening to force the Emperor to his own measures, by stopping the supplies of corn from the port of Alexandria. Constantine listened with jealous credulity to the charge. The danger of leaving the power of starving the capital in the hands of one who might become hostile to the government, touched the pride of the Emperor in the tenderest point. Athanasius was banished to the remote city of Treves.

A. D. 336.  
February.  
Banishment of  
Athanasius to  
Treves.

But neither the exile of Athanasius, nor the unqualified—his enemies of course asserted insincere or hypocritical—acceptance of the Nicene creed by Arius himself, allayed the differences. His presence in Alexandria had been the cause of new dissensions. He was recalled to Constantinople, where a council had been held, in which the Arian party maintained and abused their predominance. But Alexander, the Bishop of Constantinople, still firmly resisted the reception of Arius into the orthodox communion. Affairs were hastening to a crisis. The Arians, with the authority of the Emperor on their side, threatened to force their way into the church, and to compel the admission of their champion. The Catholics, the weaker party, had recourse to prayer; the Arians already raised the voice of triumph. While Alexander was prostrate at the altar, Arius was borne through the wondering city in a kind of ovation, surrounded by his friends, and welcomed with loud acclamations by his own party. As he passed the porphyry column, he was forced to retire into a house to relieve his natural wants. His return was anxiously expected, but in vain; he was found dead, as his antagonists declared, his bowels had burst out, and relieved the church from the presence of the obstinate heretic. We cannot wonder that, at such a period of excitement, the Catholics, in that well-timed incident, recognised a direct providential interference in their favour. It was ascribed to the prevailing prayers of Alexander and his clergy. Under the specious pretext of a thanksgiving for the deliverance of the church from the imminent peril of external violence, the Bishop prepared a solemn service. Athanasius, in a public epistle, alludes to the fate of Judas, which had befallen the traitor to the coequal

Arius in  
Constanti-  
nople.

Death of  
Arius.

dignity of the Son. His hollow charity ill disguises his secret triumph (1).

Whatever effect the death of Arius might produce upon the mind of Constantine, it caused no mitigation in his unfavourable opinion of Athanasius. He contemptuously rejected the petitions which were sent from Alexandria to solicit his reinstatement; he refused to recall that "proud, turbulent, obstinate, and intractable" prelate. It was not till his death bed, that his consent was hardly extorted for this act of mercy, or rather of justice.

Baptism of  
Constantine

The Baptism of Constantine on his death bed is one of those questions which has involved ecclesiastical historians in inextricable embarrassment. The fact is indisputable, it rests on the united authority of the Greek and Latin writers. Though he had so openly espoused the cause of Christianity, though he had involved himself so deeply in the interests of the Christian community, attended on their worship, presided, or at least sanctioned their councils with his presence, and had been constantly surrounded by the Christian clergy, the Emperor had still deferred till the very close of his life, his formal reception into the Christian church, the ablution of his sins, the admission to the privileges and hopes of the Christian, by that indispensable rite of Baptism (2). There seems but one plain solution of this difficulty. The Emperor constantly maintained a kind of superiority over the Christian part of his subjects. It was still rather the lofty and impartial condescension of a protector, than the spiritual equality of the proselyte. He still asserted, and in many cases exercised, the privilege of that high indifferentism, which ruled his conduct by his own will or judgment, rather than by the precepts of a severe and definite religion. He was reluctant, though generally convinced of the truth, and disposed to recognise the superiority of the Christian religion, to commit himself by the irrevocable act of initiation. He may have been still more unwilling to sever himself entirely from the Heathen majority of his subjects, lest by such a step, in some sudden yet always possible crisis, he might shake their allegiance. In short he would not surrender any part of his dignity, as Emperor of the world; especially as he might suppose that, even if necessary to his salvation as a Christian, he could command at any time the advantages of baptism. On the other

(1) It was a standing argument of Athanasius, that the death of Arius was a sufficient refutation of his heresy.

Εἰς γὰρ τελείαν καταύγασιν τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Ἀρειανῶν, αὐτάρκης ἡ περὶ τοῦ θανάτου Ἀρείου γενομένη παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου κρίσις. Ded. Epist. ad Monachos. 3. Op. v. i. 344.

(2) Mosheim's observations on the Christianity of Constantine are characterised by his usual good sense and judgment. De Rebus Christ. antè Const. Magnum. p. 965. I extract only a few sentences. Erat ip[s]is post victum Maxentium

annis in animo ejus cum omnis religionis, tum Christianæ imprimis, parum sana et propius à Græcorum et Romanorum opinione remota notio. Nescius enim salutis et beneficiorum à Christo humano generi partorum, Christum Deum esse putabat, qui cultorum suorum fidem et diligentiam felicitate hujus vitæ, rebusque secundis comparare, hostes vero et contemptores mox penis, malisque omnis generis afficere potuit. Ita sensim de vera religionis Christianæ indole edoctus stultitiam et deformitatem antiquarum superstitionum clarius perspiciebat, et Christo uni sincere nomen dabat. p. 977, 978.

hand, the Christians, then far more pliant than when their undisputed authority ruled the minds of monarchs with absolute sway, hardly emerged from persecution, struggling for a still contested supremacy, divided among themselves, and each section courting the favour of the Emperor, were glad to obtain an imperial convert on his own terms. In constant hope that the emperor himself would take this decisive step, they were too prudent or too cautious to urge it with imperious or unnecessary vehemence. He was not so entirely their own, but that he might still be estranged by indiscretion or intemperance; he would gradually become more enlightened, and they were content to wait in humble patience till that Providence who had raised up this powerful protector, should render him fully, and exclusively, and openly, their own.

If it be difficult to determine the extent to which Constantine proceeded in the establishment of Christianity, it is even more perplexing to estimate how far he exerted the imperial authority in the abolition of Paganism. Conflicting evidence encounters us at every point. Eusebius, in three distinct passages in his "Life of Constantine," asserts that he prohibited sacrifice (1); that he issued two laws to prohibit, both in the city and in the country, the pollutions of the old idolatry, the setting up of statues, divinations, and other unlawful practices; and to command the total abolition of sacrifice (2); that throughout the Roman empire, the "doors of idolatry" were closed to the people and to the army, and every kind of sacrifice was prohibited (3). Theodoret asserts (4) that Constantine prohibited sacrifice, and, though he did not destroy, shut up all the temples. In a passage of his Panegyric (5), Eusebius asserts, that he sent two officers into every part of the empire, who forced the priests to surrender up the statues of their gods, which, having been despoiled of their ornaments, were melted or destroyed. These strong assertions of Eusebius are, to a certain extent, confirmed by expressions in the laws of his successors, especially one of Constantians, which appeals to an edict of his father Constantine, which prohibited sacrifice (6).

Extent to which Paganism was suppressed.

On the other hand, Eusebius himself inserts, and ascribes to a date posterior to some of these laws, documents, which he professes

(1) Οὕτως ἀπειρητο, ii. 44.

(2) Δύο κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ἐπέμποντο νόμοι· ὁ μὲν εἰργαν τὰ μυσσάρα τῆς κατὰ πόλεις καὶ χώρας τὸ παλαιὸν συντελουμένης εἰδωλοκρατίας, ὥς μήτε ἐγέρσεις ξοάνων ποιῆσθαι τολμᾶν, μήτε μαντεῖαις καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις περιεργίαις ἐπιχειρεῖν, μήτε μὲν θύειν καθόλου μηδὲνα. ii. 45.

(3) Καθόλου, δὲ τοῖς ὑπὸ τῇ Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῇ δῆμοις τε καὶ στρατιωτικοῖς, πύλαι ἀπεκλείοντο εἰδωλοκρατίας, θυ-

σίας τε τρόπος ἀπνηγορεύετο πᾶς. iv. 23. διεκαλύετο μὲν θύειν εἰδώλοις. ibid. 25. δῆμοις may mean the magistracy, the public ceremonial.

(4) Theodoret, vi. 21. Compare Sozomen, iii. 17.; Orosius, vii. 28.

(5) De Laudib. Constant, i. 8.

(6) Cusset superstitio, sacrificiorum aboleatur insania. Nam quicunque contra legem divi Principis, parentis nostri, et hanc nostrae mansuetudinis jussionem ausus fuerit sacrificia celebrare, competens in eum vindicta, et præsens sententia exseratur. Cod. Theodos. xvi. 10. 2. See likewise the note of Godefroy.



to have seen in Constantine's own hand, proclaiming the most impartial toleration to the Pagans, and deprecating compulsion in religious matters. "Let all enjoy the same peace; let no one disturb another in his religious worship; let each act as he thinks fit; let those who withhold their obedience from Thee (it is an address to the Deity), have their temples of falsehood if they think right (1)." He exhorts to mutual charity, and declares, "It is a very different thing willingly to submit to trials for the sake of immortal life, and to force others by penalties to embrace one faith (2)." These generous sentiments, if Constantine was issuing edicts to close the temples, and prohibiting the sacred rites of his Pagan subjects, had been the grossest hypocrisy. The laws against the soothsayers spoke, as was before shown, the same tolerant language with regard to the public ceremony of the religion (3). Can the victory over Licinius so entirely have changed the policy of Constantine, as to induce him to prohibit altogether, rites which but a few years before he had sanctioned by his authority?

The Pagan writers, who are not scrupulous in their charges against the memory of Constantine, and dwell with bitter resentment on all his overt acts of hostility to the ancient religion, do not accuse him of these direct encroachments on Paganism. Neither Julian nor Zosimus lay this to his charge. Libanius distinctly asserts that the temples were left open and undisturbed during his reign, and that Paganism remained unchanged (4).

All historical records strongly confirm the opinion, that Paganism was openly professed; its temples restored (5); its rites celebrated; neither was its priesthood degraded from their immunities, nor the estates belonging to the temples generally alienated; in short, that it was the public religion of a great part of the empire; and still confronted Christianity, if not on equal terms, still with pertinacious resistance, down to the reign of Theodosius, and even that of his sons. Constantine himself, though he neither offered sacrifices, nor consulted the Sibylline books, nor would go up to the temple of the Capitoline Jupiter with the senate and the people, performed, ne-

(1) Ὅμοιαν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν οἱ πλανώμενοι χαίροντες λαμβανέτωσαν εἰρήνης τε καὶ ἡσυχίας ἀπόλαυσιν\*\* Μηδεὶς τὸν ἕτερον παρενοχλεῖτω· ἕκαστος ὅπῃ ἡ ψυχὴ βούλεται τοῦτο καὶ πράττειτω\* Οἱ δ' ἑαυτοὺς ἀρέσκοντες, ἐχόντων βουλόμενοι τὰ τῆς ψευδολογίας τεμένη. Vit. Const. ii. 26.

(2) Ἄλλο γὰρ ἐστὶ, τὸν ὑπὲρ ἀθανασίας ἄθλον ἐκουσίας ἐπαναριεῖσθαι, ἄλλο τὸ μετὰ τιμωρίας ἐπαναγκάζειν. c. 60.

(3) Qui vero id vobis existimatis conducere, adite aras publicas atque delubra et consuetudinibus vestrae celebrate solemnia; nec enim prohibemus præterita usurpationis officia libera luce tractari. Cod. Theodos. xvi. 40.

(4) Τῆς κατὰ νόμον δὲ θεραπείας ἐκίνησεν οὐδὲ ἐν. Pro Templis, vol. ii. p. 162.

Libanius adds that Constantius, on a certain change of circumstances, first prohibited sacrifice. Compare also Orat. 26. Julian Orat. vii. p. 424.

(5) See in Gruter, p. 100 n. 6., the inscription on the restoration of the Temple of Concord, during the consulship of Paulinus (A. C. 331, 332.), by the authority of the prefect of the city, and S. P. Q. R. Altars were erected to other Pagan gods. Compare Beugnot, i. 106.

M. Beugnot in his Destruction du Paganisme en Occident, has collected with great industry the proofs of this fact, from inscriptions, medals, and other of the more minute contemporary memorials.

vertheless, some of the functions, at least did not disdain the appellation, of Supreme Pontiff (1).

Perhaps we may safely adopt the following conclusions. There were two kinds of sacrifices abolished by Constantine. I. The private sacrifices, connected with unlawful acts of theurgy and of magic; those midnight offerings to the powers of darkness, which, in themselves, were illegal, and led to scenes of unhallowed licence (2). II. Those which might be considered the state sacrifices offered by the Emperor himself, or by his representatives in his name, either in the cities or in the army. Though Constantine advanced many Christians to offices of trust, and no doubt many who were ambitious of such offices conformed to the religion of the Emperor, probably most of the high dignities of the state were held by Pagans. An edict might be required to induce them to depart from the customary usage of sacrifice, which with the Christian officers would quietly fall into desuetude (3). But still, the sacrifices made by the priesthood, at the expense of the sacerdotal establishments, and out of their own estates—though in some instances these estates were seized by Constantine, and the sacerdotal colleges reduced to poverty—and the *public* sacrifices, offered by the piety of distinguished individuals, would be made as usual. In the capital there can be little doubt that sacrifices were offered, in the name of the senate and people of Rome, till a much later period.

Christianity may now be said to have ascended the imperial throne: with the single exception of Julian, from this period the monarchs of the Roman empire professed the religion of the Gospel. This important crisis in the history of Christianity almost forcibly arrests the attention to contemplate the change wrought in Christianity by its advancement into a dominant power in the state; and the change in the condition of mankind up to this period, attributable to the direct authority or indirect influence of the new religion. By ceasing to exist as a separate community, and by advancing its pretensions to influence the general government of mankind, Christianity, to a certain extent, forfeited its independence. It could not but submit to these laws, framed, as it might seem, with its own concurrent voice. It was no longer a republic, governed exclusively—as far at least as its religious concerns—by its own internal polity. The interference of the civil power in some

Legal establishments of Christianity.

Effects of this on the religion.

(1) There is a medal extant of Constantine as Supreme Pontiff.

(2) See the laws relating to divination, above, p. 30.

M. la Bastie and M. Beugnot would consider the terms τὰ μυστὰ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας, in the rescript of Constantine, and the “*insana superstitio*” of the law of Constans, to refer exclusively to these nocturnal and forbidden sacrifices. M. Beugnot has observed, that Constantine always uses respectful and courteous language concerning Paganism. *Vetus observantia, vetus*

*consuetudo; templorum solemnitas; consuetudinis gentilitiæ solemnitas.* The laws of the later emperors employ very different terms. Error; dementia; error veterum; profanus ritus; sacrilegius ritus; nefarius ritus; superstitio Pagana, damnabilis, damnata, deterima, impia; funeste superstitionis errores; stolidus Paganorum error. Cod. Theodos. t. v. p. 255. Beugnot, tom. i. p. 80.

(3) The prohibition to the δῆμοι and στρατιωτικοί (see quotation above from Eusebius) refer, I conceive, to these.

of its most private affairs, the promulgation of its canons, and even in some cases the election of its bishops by the state, was the price which it must inevitably pay for its association with the ruling power. The natural satisfaction, the more than pardonable triumph, in seeing the Emperor of the world a suppliant with themselves at the foot of the cross, would blind the Christian world, in general, to these consequences of their more exalted position. The more ardent and unworldly would fondly suppose that a Christian emperor would always be actuated by Christian motives; and the imperial authority, instead of making aggressions on Christian independence, would rather bow in humble submission to its acknowledged dominion. His main object would be, to develop the energies of the new religion in the amplest freedom, and allow them free scope in the subjugation of the world.

On the civil power,

The Emperor as little anticipated that he was introducing as an antagonist power, an inextinguishable principle of liberty into the administration of human affairs. This liberty was based on deeper foundations than the hereditary freedom of the ancient republics. It appealed to a tribunal higher than any which could exist upon earth. This antagonist principle of independence, however, at times apparently crushed, and submitting to voluntary slavery, or even lending itself to be the instrument of arbitrary despotism, was inherent in the new religion, and would not cease till it had asserted and, for a considerable period, exercised an authority superior to that of the civil government. Already in Athanasius might be seen the one subject of Constantine who dared to resist his will. From Athanasius, who submitted, but with inflexible adherence to his own opinions, to Ambrose, who rebuked the great Theodosius, and from Ambrose up to the Pope who set his foot on the neck of the prostrate Emperor, the progress was slow, but natural and certain. In this profound prostration of the human mind, and the total extinction of the old sentiments of Roman liberty, in the adumbration of the world, by what assumed the pomp and the language of an Asiatic despotism, it is impossible to calculate the latent as well as open effect of this moral resistance. In Constantinople, indeed, and in the East, the clergy never obtained sufficient power to be formidable to the civil authority; their feuds too often brought them in a sort of moral servitude to the foot of the throne; still the Christian, and the Christian alone, throughout this long period of human degradation breathed a kind of atmosphere of moral freedom, which raised him above the general level of servile debasement.

How far the religion of the empire:

During the reign of Constantine, Christianity had made a rapid advance, no doubt, in the number of its proselytes, as well as in its external position. It was not yet the established religion of the empire. It did not as yet stand forward as the new religion adapted



to the new order of things, as a part of the great simultaneous change, which gave to the Roman world a new system of government, and, in some important instances, a new jurisprudence. Yet having sprung up at once, under the royal favour, to a perfect equality with the prevailing Heathenism, the mere manifestation of that favour, where the antagonist religion hung so loose upon the minds of men, gave it much of the power and authority of a dominant faith. The religion of the Emperor would soon become that of the empire. At present, however, as we have seen, little open aggression took place upon Paganism. The few temples which were closed were insulated cases, and condemned as offensive to public morality. In general, the temples stood in all their former majesty; for as yet the ordinary process of decay, from neglect or supineness, could have produced little effect. The difference was, that the Christian churches began to assume a more stately and imposing form. In the new capital, they surpassed in grandeur, and probably in decoration, the Pagan temples, which belonged to old Byzantium. The immunities granted to the Christian clergy only placed them on the same level with the Pagan priesthood. The pontifical offices were still held by the distinguished men of the state: the Emperor himself was long the chief pontiff; but the religious office had become a kind of appendage to the temporal dignity. The Christian prelates were constantly admitted, in virtue of their office, to the imperial presence.

On the state of society at large, on its different forms and gradations, little impression had as yet been made by Christianity. The Christians were still a separate people; their literature was exclusively religious, and addressed, excepting in its apologies, or its published exhortations against Paganism, to the initiate alone. Its language would be unintelligible to those uninstructed in Christian theology. Yet the general legislation of Constantine, independent of those edicts which concerned the Christian community, bears some evidence of the silent underworking of Christian opinion. The rescript, indeed, for the religious observance of the Sunday, which enjoined the suspension of all public business and private labour, except that of agriculture, was enacted, according to the apparent terms of the decree, for the whole Roman empire. Yet, unless we had direct proof, that the decree set forth the Christian reason for the sanctity of the day, it may be doubted whether the act would not be received by the greater part of the empire, as merely adding one more festival to the fasti of the empire, as proceeding entirely from the will of the Emperor, or even grounded on his authority as Supreme Pontiff, by which he had the plenary power of appointing holy-days (1). In fact, as we have before

Effect of  
legal esta-  
blishment  
of Christi-  
anity on  
society.

Laws relat-  
ing to Sun-  
days.

(1) Cod. Theod. i. 2. tit. 8.; i. 8. tit. 8.; i. 5. tit. 3, Cod. Just. iii. 12.; Euseb. Vit. Const. 18, 19, 20; Sozom. i. 8.

observed, the day of the Sun would be willingly hallowed by almost all the Pagan world, especially that part which had admitted any tendency towards the Oriental theology.

Lawstend-  
ing to hu-  
manity.

Where the legislation of Constantine was of a humaner cast, it would be unjust not to admit the influence of Christian opinions, spreading even beyond the immediate circle of the Christian community, as at least a concurrent cause of the improvement. In one remarkable instance, there is direct authority that a certain measure was adopted by the advice of an influential Christian. During the period of anarchy and confusion which preceded the universal empire of Constantine, the misery had been so great, particularly in Africa and Italy, that the sale of infants for slaves, their exposure, and even infanticide, had become fearfully common. Constantine issued an edict, in which he declared that the Emperor should be considered the father of all such children. It was a cruelty, irreconcilable with the spirit of the times to permit any subjects of the empire to perish of starvation, or to be reduced to any unworthy action by actual hunger. Funds were assigned for the food and clothing of such children as the parents should declare themselves unable to support, partly on the imperial revenues, partly on the revenues of the neighbouring cities. As this measure did not prevent the sale of children, parents were declared incapable of reclaiming children thus sold, unless they paid a reasonable price for their enfranchisement (1). Children which had been exposed could not be reclaimed from those who had received them into their families, whether by adoption or as slaves. Whatever may have been the wisdom, the humanity of these ordinances is unquestionable. They are said to have been issued by the advice of Lactantius, to whom had been entrusted the education of Crispus, the son of Constantine.

Concern-  
ing sla-  
very.

Child-stealing, for the purpose of selling them for slaves, was visited with a penalty, which both in its nature and barbarity retained the stamp of the old Roman manners. The criminal was condemned to the amphitheatre, either to be devoured by wild beasts or exhibited as a gladiator. Christianity had not as yet allayed the passion for these savage amusements of the Roman people; yet, in conjunction with the somewhat milder manners of the East, it excluded gladiatorial exhibitions from the new capital. The Grecian amusements of the theatre and of the chariot race satisfied the populace of Constantinople. Whatever might be the improved condition of the slaves within the Christian community, the tone of legislation preserves the same broad and distinct line of demarcation between the two classes of society. The master, indeed, was deprived of the arbitrary power of life and death. The death of a slave under

(1) *Codex, Theodos. v. vii. 1.* On the exposure of children at this time, compare Lactantius *D. i. ii. 20.*

torture, or any excessive severity of punishment, was punishable as homicide; but if he died under a *moderate* chastisement, the master was not responsible. In the distribution of the royal domains, care was to be taken not to divide the families of the prædial slaves. It is a cruelty, says the law, to separate parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives (1). But marriages of free women with slaves were punishable with death; the children of such unions were indeed free, but could not inherit their mothers' property. The person of dignity and station, who had children by a marriage contract with a woman of base condition, could not make a testament in their favour; even purchases made in their names or for their benefit, might be claimed by the legitimate heirs. The base condition comprehended not only slaves but freed women, actresses, tavern keepers, and their daughters, as well as those of courtezans or gladiators. Slaves who were concerned in the seduction of their masters' children were to be burned alive without distinction of sex. The barbarity of this punishment rather proves the savage manners of the time than the inferior condition of the slave; for the receivers of the royal domains who were convicted of depredation or fraud were condemned to the same penalty (2).

It can scarcely be doubted that the stricter moral tone of Constantine's legislation more or less remotely emanated from Christianity. The laws against rape and seduction were framed with so much rigour, as probably to make their general execution difficult, if not impracticable (3). The ravisher had before escaped with impunity: if the injured party did not prosecute him for his crime, she had the right of demanding reparation by marriage. By the law of Constantine, the consent of the female made her an accomplice in the crime; she was amenable to the same penalty. What that penalty was is not quite clear, but it seems that the ravisher was exposed to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre. Even where the female had suffered forcible abduction, she had to acquit herself of all suspicion of consent, either from levity of manner, or want of proper vigilance. Those pests of society, the pandars, who abused the confidence of parents, and made a traffic of the virtue of their daughters, were in the same spirit condemned to a punishment so horrible, as, no doubt, more frequently to ensure their impunity: melted lead was to be poured down their throats. Parents who did not prosecute such offences were banished, and their property confiscated. It is not, however, so much the severity of the punishments, indicating a stronger abhorrence of the crime, as the social

Law  
against  
rape and  
abduction.

(1) Cod. Theod.

(2) Manumission, which was performed under the sanction of a religious ceremonial in the Heathen temples, might now be performed in the church: the clergy might manumit their slaves, in the presence of the church. Cod. Theod. iv. 7. 1.

This law must have connected Christianity in the general sentiment with the emancipation of slaves. Compare Sozomen, i. 9. who says, that Constantine issued three laws on the subject. The manumission took place publicly at Easter. Greg. Nyss.

(3) Cod. Theod.



Law  
against  
adultery.

Concern-  
ing di-  
vorce.

and moral evils of which it took cognisance, which shows the remoter workings of a sterner moral principle. A religion which requires of its followers a strict, as regards the Christianity of this period, it may be said an ascetic rigour, desires to enforce on the mass of mankind by the power of the law that which it cannot effect by the more legitimate and permanent means of moral influence. In a small community where the law is the echo of the public sentiment, or where it rests on an acknowledged divine authority, it may advance further into the province of morality, and extend its provisions into every relation of society. The Mosaic law, which, simultaneously with the Christian spirit, began to enter into the legislation of the Christian emperors, in its fearful penalties imposed upon the illicit commerce of the sexes, concurred with the rigorous jealousy of the Asiatic tribes of that region concerning the honour of their women. But when the laws of Constantine suddenly classed the crime of adultery with those of poison and assassination, and declared it a capital offence, it may be doubted whether any improvement ensued, or was likely to ensue, in the public morals. Unless Christianity had already greatly corrected the general licentiousness of the Roman world, not merely within but without its pale, it may safely be affirmed that the general and impartial execution of such a statute was impossible (1). The severity of the law against the breach of conjugal fidelity was accompanied with strong restrictions upon the facility of divorce. Three crimes alone, in the husband, justified the wife in demanding a legal separation,—homicide, poisoning, or the violation of sepulchres. This latter crime was, apparently, very frequent, and looked upon with great abhorrence (2). In these cases, the wife recovered her dowry; if she separated for any other cause, she forfeited all to a single needle, and was liable to perpetual banishment (3). The husband, in order to obtain a divorce, must convict his wife of poisoning, adultery, or keeping notoriously infamous company. In all other cases, he restored the whole of the dowry. If he married again, the former wife, thus illegally cast off, might claim his whole property, and even the dowry of the second wife. These impediments to the dissolution of the marriage tie, the facility of which experience and reason concur in denouncing as destructive of social virtue and of domestic happiness, with its penalties affecting the property rather than the person, were more likely to have a favourable and extensive operation than the san-

(1) It may be admitted as some evidence of the inefficiency of this law, that in the next reign the penalties were actually aggravated. The criminals were condemned either to be burned alive, or sewed up in a sack and cast into the sea.

(2) Codex. Theodos. iii. 16. 1.

(3) The law of Constantine and Constans, which made intermarriage with a niece a capital

crime, is supposed by Godefroy to have been a local act, directed against the laxity of Syrian morals in this respect. Cod. Theod. iii. 12. 1. The law issued at Rome, prohibiting intermarriage with the sister of a deceased wife, annulled the marriage, and bastardised the children. iii. 12. 2.

guinary proscription of adultery. Marriage being a civil contract in the Roman world, the state had full right to regulate the stability and the terms of the compact. In other respects, in which the jurisprudence assumed a higher tone, Christianity, I should conceive, was far more influential through its religious persuasiveness, than by the rigour which it thus impressed upon the laws of the empire. That nameless crime, the universal disgrace of Greek and Roman society, was far more effectively repressed by the abhorrence infused into the public sentiment by the pure religion of the Gospel, than by the penalty of death, enacted by statute against the offence. Another law of unquestionable humanity, and, probably, of more extensive operation, prohibited the making of eunuchs. The slave who had suffered this mutilation might at once claim his freedom (1).

Against  
pæderasty.

Making of  
eunuchs.

Perhaps the greatest evidence of the secret aggression of Christianity, or rather, in our opinion, the foreign Asiatic principle which was now completely interwoven with Christianity, was the gradual relaxation of the laws unfavourable to celibacy. The Roman law had always proceeded on the principle of encouraging the multiplication of citizens, particularly in the higher orders, which, from various causes, especially the general licentiousness under the later republic and the early empire, were in danger of becoming extinct. The parent of many children was a public benefactor, the unmarried man a useless burden, if not a traitor, to the well-being of the state. The small establishment of the vestal virgins was evidently the remains of an older religion, inconsistent with the general sentiment and manners of Rome.

Laws fa-  
vourable  
to celi-  
bacy.

On this point the encroachment of Christianity was slow and difficult. The only public indication of its influence was the relaxation of the Papiapoppæan law. This statute enforced certain disabilities on those who were unmarried, or without children by their marriage, at the age of twenty-five. The former could only inherit from their nearest relations; the latter obtained only the tenth of any inheritance which might devolve on their wives, the moiety of property devised to them by will. The forfeiture went to the public treasury, and was a considerable source of profit. Constantine attempted to harmonise the two conflicting principles. He removed the disqualifications on celibacy, but he left the statute in force against married persons who were without children. In more manifest deference to Christianity, he extended the privilege hitherto confined to the vestal virgins, of making their will, and that before the usual age appointed by the law, to all who had made a religious vow of celibacy.

Even after his death, both religions vied, as it were, for Constantine. He received with impartial favour the honours of both.

Burial of  
Constantine.

(1) All these laws will be found in the Theodosian Code, under the name of Constantine at the commencement of each book.

The first Christian emperor was deified by the Pagans, in a later period he was worshipped as a saint by part of the Christian church. On the same medal appears his title of "God," with the monogram, the sacred symbol of Christianity; in another he is seated in the chariot of the Sun, in a car drawn by four horses, with a hand stretched forth from the clouds to raise him to Heaven (1). But to show respect at once to the Emperor and to the Christian Apostle, contrary to the rigid usage, which forbade any burial to take place within the city, Constantine was interred in the porch of the church dedicated to the Apostles. Constantius did great honour (in Chrysostom's opinion) to his imperial father, by burying him in the Fisherman's Porch (2).

Conversion of  
Ethiopia.

During the reign of Constantine, Christianity continued to advance beyond the borders of the Roman empire, and, in some degree, to indemnify herself for the losses which she sustained in the kingdom of Persia. The Ethiopians appear to have attained some degree of civilisation; a considerable part of the Arabian commerce was kept up with the other side of the Red Sea, through the port of Adulis; and Greek letters appear, from inscriptions recently discovered (3), to have made considerable progress among this barbarous people. The Romans called this country, with that of the Homerites on the other side of the Arabian gulph, by the vague name of the nearer India. Travellers were by no means uncommon in these times, whether for purposes of trade, or, following the traditional history of the ancient sages, from the more disinterested desire of knowledge. Metrodorus, a philosopher, had extended his travels throughout this region (4), and, on his return, the account of his adventures induced another person of the same class, Meropius of Tyre, to visit the same regions. Meropius was accompanied by two youths, Edesius and Frumentius. Meropius, with most of his followers, fell in a massacre, arising out of some

(1) *Inter Divos meruit referri*; Eutrop. x. 8. Eckhel. doct. numm. viii. 92, 93. Bolland, 21st Maij. Compare Le Beau, *Hist. du Bas Empire*, i. p. 388. Beugnot, i. 109.

There exists a calendar in which the festivals of the new God are indicated. *Acad. des Inscript.* xv. 106.

(2) Chrysost. Hom. 60. in 2 Cor.

(3) That published by Mr. Salt, from the ruins of Axum, had already appeared in the work of Cosmas Indicopleustes, edited by Montfaucon; Niebuhr published another, discovered by Gau, in Nubia, relating to Silco, king of that country.

(4) The same Metrodorus afterwards made a journey into further India; his object was to visit the Brahmins, to examine their religious tenets and practices. Metrodorus instructed the Indians in the construction of water-mills and baths. In their gratitude, they opened to him the inmost sanctuary of their temples. But the virtue of the philosopher Metrodorus, was not proof against the gorgeous treasures which dazzled his eyes; he stole a great quantity of pearls, and other jewels; others, he said that

he had received as a present to Constantine from the King of India. He appeared in Constantinople. The Emperor received, with the highest satisfaction, those magnificent gifts which Metrodorus presented in his own name. But Metrodorus complained that his offerings would have been far more sumptuous if he had not been attacked on his way through Persia, contrary to the spirit of the existing peace between the empires, and plundered of great part of his treasures. Constantine, it is said, wrote an indignant remonstrance to the King of Persia. This story is curious, as it shows the connection kept up by traders and travellers with the further East, which accounts for the allusions to Indian tenets and usages in the Christian, as well as the Pagan, writers of the time. It rests on the late authority of Cedrenus (t. i. p. 295.), but is confirmed by a passage of Ammianus Marcellinus, who, however, places it in the reign of Constantine. *Sed Constantium ardore Parthicos succendisse, cum Metrodori mendacis avidius acquiescit.* lxxv. c. 4. Compare St. Martin's additions to Le Beau, i. 343.



sudden interruption of the peace between the Ethiopians and the Romans. Edesius and Frumentius were spared on account of their youth. They were taken into the service of the King, and gradually rose, till one became the royal cup-bearer; the other, the administrator of the royal finances. The King died soon after they had been elevated to these high distinctions, and bequeathed their liberty to the strangers. The queen entreated them to continue their valuable services till her son should attain to full age. The Romans complied with her request, and the supreme government of the kingdom of Ethiopia was administered by these two Romans, but the chief post was occupied by Frumentius. Of the causes which disposed the mind of Frumentius towards Christianity we know nothing; he is represented as seized with an eager desire of becoming acquainted with its tenets, and anxiously inquiring whether any Christians existed in the country, or could be found among the Roman travellers who visited it (1). It is more probable, since there were so many Jews, both on the Arabian and the African side of the gulf, that some earlier knowledge of Christianity had spread into these regions. But it was embraced with ardour by Frumentius; he built a church, and converted many of the people. When the young king came of age, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the prince and his mother, Frumentius and his companion returned to their native country. Frumentius passed through Alexandria, and having communicated to Athanasius the happy beginnings of the Gospel in that wild region, the influence of that commanding prelate induced him to accept the mission of the Apostle of India. He was consecrated Bishop of Axum by the Alexandrian prelate, and that see was always considered to owe allegiance to the patriarchate of Alexandria. The preaching of Frumentius was said to have been eminently successful, not merely among the Ethiopians, but the neighbouring tribes of Nubians and Blemmyes. His name is still revered as the first of the Ethiopian pontiffs. But probably in no country did Christianity so soon degenerate into a mere form of doctrine; the wild inhabitants of these regions sank downward rather than ascended in the scale of civilisation; and the fruits of Christianity, humanity, and knowledge, were stifled amid the conflicts of savage tribes, by ferocious manners, and less frequent intercourse with more cultivated nations.

The conversion of the Iberians (2) was the work of a holy virgin. Nino was among the Armenian maidens who fled from the persecutions of the Persians, and found refuge among the warlike na-

Of the  
Iberians.

(1) Sozomen, in his ignorance, has recourse to visions, or direct divine inspiration. *Θείαις ἰσως προφαιαῖς ἐπιφανείαις, ἢ καὶ αὐτομάτως τοῦ Θεοῦ κινουῦντος.*

(2) Socrates, i. 20.; Sozomen, ii. c. 7.; Rufin, x. 10.; Theodoret, i. 24.; Moses Choren, Lib. ii. c. 83.; Klaproth, Travels in Georgia.

tion of Iberia, the modern Georgia. Her seclusion, her fasting, and constant prayers, excited the wonder of these fierce warriors. Two cures which she is said to have wrought, one on the wife of the king, still further directed the attention of the people to the marvellous stranger. The grateful queen became a convert to Christianity. Mihran, the king, still wavered between the awe of his ancient deities, the fear of his subjects, and his inclination to the new and wonder-working faith. One day when he was hunting in a thick and intricate wood, he was enveloped in a sudden and impenetrable mist. Alone, separated from his companions, his awe-struck mind thought of the Christians' God; he determined to embrace the Christian faith. On a sudden the mist cleared off, the light shone gloriously down, and in this natural image the king beheld the confirmation of the light of truth spread abroad within his soul. After much opposition, the temple of the great god Aramazd (the Ormuzd of the Persian system) was levelled with the earth. A cross was erected upon its ruins by the triumphant Nino, which was long worshipped as the palladium of the kingdom (1). Wonders attended on the construction of the first Christian church. An obstinate pillar refused to rise, and defied the utmost mechanical skill of the people to force it from its oblique and pendant position. The holy virgin passed the night in prayer. On the morning the pillar rose majestically of its own accord, and stood upright upon its pedestal. The wondering people burst into acclamations of praise to the Christians' god, and generally embraced the faith. The king of Iberia entered into an alliance with Constantine, who sent him valuable presents, and a Christian bishop. Eustathius, it is said, the deposed patriarch of Antioch, undertook this mission by the command of the Emperor; and Iberia was thus secured to the Christian faith.

(1) In 1801 this cross, or that which perpetual tradition accounted as the identical cross, was removed to Petersburg by Prince Bagration. It

was restored, to the great joy of the nation, by order of the Emperor Alexander.

## CHAPTER V.

### CHRISTIANITY UNDER THE SONS OF CONSTANTINE.

IF Christianity was making such rapid progress in the conquest of the world, the world was making fearful reprisals on Christianity. By enlisting new passions and interests in its cause, religion surrendered itself to an inseparable fellowship with those passions and interests. The more it mingles with the tide of human affairs, the more turbid becomes the stream of Christian history. In the intoxication of power, the Christian, like ordinary men, forgot his original character; and the religion of Jesus, instead of diffusing peace and happiness through society, might, to the superficial observer of human affairs, seem introduced only as a new element of discord and misery into the society of man.

Accession  
of the sons  
of Con-  
stantine.

The Christian emperor dies; he is succeeded by his sons, educated in the faith of the Gospel. The first act of the new reign is the murder of one of the brothers, and of the nephews of the deceased sovereign, who were guilty of being named in the will of Constantine as joint heirs to the empire. This act, indeed, was that of a ferocious soldiery, though the memory of Constantius is not free from the suspicion, at least of connivance in these bloody deeds. Christianity appears only in a favourable light as interposing between the assassins and their victim. Marcus, Bishop of Arethusa, saved Julian from his enemies: the future apostate was concealed under the altar of the church. Yet, on the accession of the sons of Constantine, to the causes of fraternal animosity usual on the division of a kingdom between several brothers, was added that of religious hostility. The two Emperors (for they were speedily reduced to two) placed themselves at the head of the two contending parties in Christianity. The weak and voluptuous Constantius adhered with inflexible firmness to the cause of Athanasius; the no less weak and tyrannical Constantius, to that of Arianism. The East was arrayed against the West. At Rome, at Alexandria, at Sardica, and, afterwards, at Arles and Milan, Athanasius was triumphantly acquitted; at Antioch, at Philippopolis, and finally at Rimini, he was condemned with almost equal unanimity. Even within the church itself, the distribution of the superior dignities became an object of fatal ambition and strife. The streets of Alexandria and of Constantinople were deluged with blood by the partisans of rival bishops. In the latter, an officer of high distinction, sent by the Emperor to quell the tumult, was slain, and his body treated with the utmost indignity by the infuriated populace.

Religious  
differen-  
ces of the  
two sur-  
viving  
sons.



To dissemble or to disguise these melancholy facts, is alike inconsistent with Christian truth and wisdom. In some degree they are accounted for by the proverbial reproach against history, that it is the record of human folly and crime; and history, when the world became impregnated with Christianity, did not at once assume a higher office. In fact, it extends its view only over the surface of society, below which, in general, lie human virtue and happiness. This would be especially the case with regard to Christianity, whether it withdrew from the sight of man, according to the monastic interpretation of its precepts, into solitary communion with the Deity, or, in its more genuine spirit, was content with exercising its humanising influence in the more remote and obscure quarters of the general social system.

Even the annals of the church take little notice of those cities where the Christian episcopate passed calmly down through a succession of pious and beneficent prelates, who lived and died in the undisturbed attachment and veneration of their Christian disciples, and respected by the hostile Pagans; men whose noiseless course of beneficence was constantly diminishing the mass of human misery, and improving the social, the moral, as well as the religious condition of mankind. But an election contested with violence, or a feud which divided a city into hostile parties, arrested the general attention, and was perpetuated in the records, at first of the church, afterwards of the empire.

Moral  
more slow  
than reli-  
gious re-  
volution.

But, in fact, the theological opinions of Christianity naturally made more rapid progress than its moral influence. The former had only to overpower the resistance of a religion which had already lost its hold upon the mind, or a philosophy too speculative for ordinary understandings, and too unsatisfactory for the more curious and enquiring; it had only to enter, as it were, into a vacant place in the mind of man. But the moral influence had to contest, not only with the natural dispositions of man, but with the barbarism and depraved manners of ages. While, then, the religion of the world underwent a total change; the church rose on the ruins of the temple, and the pontifical establishment of Paganism became gradually extinct, or suffered violent suppression; the moral revolution was far more slow and far less complete. With a large portion of mankind, it must be admitted that the religion itself was Paganism under another form and with different appellations; with another part, it was the religion passively received, without any change in the moral sentiments or habits; with a third, and, perhaps, the more considerable part, there was a transfer of the passions and the intellectual activity to a new cause (1).

(1) "If," said the dying Bishop of Constantinople, "you would have for my successor a man who would edify you by the example of his life, and improve you by the purity of his precepts,

choose Paul; if a man versed in the affairs of the world, and able to maintain the interests of the religion, your suffrages must be given to Macedonius." Socr.

They were completely identified with Christianity, and to a certain degree actuated by its principles, but they did not apprehend the beautiful harmony which subsists between its doctrines and its moral perfection. Its dogmatic purity was the sole engrossing subject; the unity of doctrine superseded and obscured all other considerations, even of that sublimer unity of principles and effects, of the loftiest views of the divine nature, with the purest conceptions of human virtue. Faith not only overpowered, but discarded from her fellowship, Love and Peace. Every where there was exaggeration of one of the constituent elements of Christianity; that exaggeration which is the inevitable consequence of a strong impulse upon the human mind. Wherever men feel strongly, they act violently. The more speculative Christians, therefore, who were more inclined, in the deep and somewhat selfish solicitude for their own salvation, to isolate themselves from the infected mass of mankind, pressed into the extreme of asceticism; the more practical, who were earnest in the desire of disseminating the blessings of religion throughout society, scrupled little to press into their service whatever might advance their cause. With both extremes, the dogmatical part of the religion predominated. The monkish believer imposed the same severity upon the aberrations of the mind as upon the appetites of the body; and, in general, those who are severe to themselves, are both disposed and think themselves entitled to enforce the same severity on others. The other, as his sphere became more extensive, was satisfied with an adhesion to the Christian creed, instead of that total change of life demanded of the early Christian, and watched over with such jealous vigilance by the mutual superintendence of a small society. The creed, thus become the sole test, was enforced with all the passion of intense zeal, and guarded with the most subtle and scrupulous jealousy. In proportion to the admitted importance of the creed, men became more sternly and exclusively wedded to their opinions. Thus an antagonist principle of exclusiveness co-existed with the most comprehensive ambition. While they swept in converts indiscriminately from the palace and the public street; while the Emperor and the lowest of the populace were alike admitted on little more than the open profession of allegiance, they were satisfied if their allegiance in this respect was blind and complete. Hence a far larger admixture of human passions, and the common vulgar incentives of action, were infused into the expanding Christian body. Men became Christians, orthodox Christians, with little sacrifice of that which Christianity aimed chiefly to extirpate. Yet, after all, this imperfect view of Christianity had probably some effect in concentrating the Christian community, and holding it together by a new and more indissoluble bond. The world divided into two parties. Though the shades of Arianism, perhaps, if strictly decomposed,

of Trinitarianism, were countless as the varying powers of conception or expression in man, yet they were soon consolidated into two compact masses. The semi-Arians, who approximated so closely to the Nicene creed, were forced back into the main body. Their fine distinctions were not seized by their adversaries, or by the general body of the Christians. The bold and decisive definitiveness of the Athanasian doctrine admitted less discretion; and no doubt, though political vicissitudes had some influence on the final establishment of their doctrines, the more illiterate and less imaginative West was predisposed to the Athanasian opinions by its natural repugnance to the more vague and dubious theory. All, however, were enrolled under one or the other standard, and the party which triumphed, eventually would rule the whole Christian world.

Even the feuds of Christianity at this period, though with the few more dispassionate and reasoning of the Pagans they might retard its progress, in some respects contributed to its advancement; they assisted in breaking up that torpid stagnation which brooded over the general mind. It gave a new object of excitement to the popular feeling. The ferocious and ignorant populace of the large cities, which found a new aliment in Christian faction for their mutinous and sanguinary outbursts of turbulence, had almost been better left to sleep on in the passive and undestructive quiet of Pagan indifference. They were dangerous allies, more than dangerous, fatal to the purity of the Gospel.

Athanasius.

Athanasius stands out as the prominent character of the period, in the history, not merely of Christianity, but of the world. That history is one long controversy, the life of Athanasius one unwearied and incessant strife (1). It is neither the serene course of a being elevated by his religion above the cares and tumults of ordinary life, nor the restless activity of one perpetually employed in a conflict with the ignorance, vice, and misery of an unconverted people. Yet even now (so completely has this polemic spirit become incorporated with Christianity) the memory of Athanasius is regarded by many wise and good men with reverence, which, in Catholic countries, is actual adoration, in Protestant, approaches towards it (2). It is impossible, indeed, not to admire the force of intellect which he centered on this minute point of theology, his intrepidity, his constancy; but had he not the power to allay the feud which his inexorable spirit tended to keep alive? Was the term *Consubstantialism* absolutely essential to Christianity? If a

(1) Life of Athanasius prefixed to his Works. Tillemont, Vie d'Athanase.

(2) Compare Möhler, Athanasius der Grosse und seine Zeit (Mainz, 1827), and Newman's Arians. The former is the work of a very powerful Roman Catholic writer, labouring to show

that all the vital principles of Christianity were involved in this controversy; and stating *one side* of the question with consummate ability. It is the panegyric of a dutiful son on him whom he calls the father of church theology. p. 304.



somewhat wider creed had been accepted, would not the truth at least as soon and as generally have prevailed? Could not the commanding or persuasive voice of Christianity have awed or charmed the troubled waters to peace?

But Athanasius, in exile, would consent to no peace which did not prostrate his antagonists before his feet. He had obtained complete command over the minds of the western Emperors. The demand for his restoration to his see was not an appeal to the justice, or the fraternal affection of Constantius; it was a question of peace or war. Constantius submitted; he received the prelate, on his return, with courtesy, or rather with favour and distinction. Athanasius entered Alexandria at the head of a triumphal procession; the bishops of his party resumed their sees; all Egypt returned to its obedience; but the more inflexible Syria still waged the war with unallayed activity. A council was held at Tyre, in which new charges were framed against the Alexandrian prelate: — the usurpation of his see in defiance of his condemnation by a council, (the imperial power seems to have been treated with no great respect), for a prelate, it was asserted, deposed by a council, could only be restored by the same authority; violence and bloodshed during his re-occupation of the see; and malversation of sums of money intended for the poor, but appropriated to his own use. A rival council at Alexandria at once acquitted Athanasius on all these points; asserted his right to the see; appealed to and avouched the universal rejoicings at his restoration; his rigid administration of the funds entrusted to his care (1).

A. D. 338.  
Restoration of  
Athanasius to  
Alexandria.  
A. D. 340.

A more august assembly of Christian prelates met in the presence of the Emperor at Antioch. Ninety bishops celebrated the consecration of a splendid edifice, called the Church of Gold. The council then entered on the affairs of the church; a creed was framed satisfactory to all, except that it seemed carefully to exclude the term consubstantial or Homousion. The council ratified the decrees of that of Tyre, with regard to Athanasius. It is asserted on his part that the majority had withdrawn to their dioceses before the introduction of this question, and that a factious minority of forty prelates assumed and abused the authority of the council. They proceeded to nominate a new bishop of Alexandria. Pistus, who had before been appointed to the see, was passed over in silence, probably as too inactive or unambitious for their purpose. Gregory, a native of the wilder region of Cappadocia, but educated under Athanasius himself, in the more polished schools of Alexandria, was invested with this important dignity. Alexandria, peacefully reposing, it is said, under the parental episcopate of Athanasius, was suddenly startled by the appearance of an edict, signed

A. D. 341.  
Council at  
Antioch.

(1) Compare throughout the ecclesiastical historians, Theodoret, Socrates, and Sozomen.

by the imperial præfect, announcing the degradation of Athanasius, and the appointment of Gregory. Scenes of savage conflict ensued; the churches were taken as it were by storm; the priests of the Athanasian party were treated with the utmost indignity; virgins scourged; every atrocity perpetrated by unbridled multitudes, embittered by every shade of religious faction. The Alexandrian populace were always ripe for tumult and bloodshed. The Pagans and the Jews mingled in the fray, and seized the opportunity, no doubt, of shewing their impartial animosity to both parties; though the Arians (and, as the original causes of the tumult, not without justice) were loaded with the unpopularity of this odious alliance. They arrayed themselves on the side of the soldiery appointed to execute the decree of the præfect; and the Arian bishop is charged, not with much probability, with abandoning the churches to their pillage. Athanasius fled; a second time an exile, he took refuge in the West. He appeared again at Rome, in the dominions and under the protection of an orthodox Emperor; for Constans, who, after the death of Constantine, the first protector of Athanasius, had obtained the larger part of the empire belonging to his murdered brother, was no less decided in his support of the Nicene opinions. The two great Western prelates, Hosius of Cordova, eminent from his age and character, and Julius, bishop of Rome, from the dignity of his see, openly espoused his cause. Wherever Athanasius resided,—at Alexandria, in Gaul, in Rome,—in general the devoted clergy, and even the people, adhered with unshaken fidelity to his tenets. Such was the commanding dignity of his character, such his power of profoundly stamping his opinions on the public mind.

Athanasius flies to Rome.

Usurpation of Gregory.

The Arian party, independent of their speculative opinions, cannot be absolved from the unchristian heresy of cruelty and revenge. However darkly coloured, we cannot reject the general testimony to their acts of violence, wherever they attempted to regain their authority. Gregory is said to have attempted to compel bishops, priests, monks, and holy virgins, to Christian communion with a prelate thus forced upon them, by every kind of insult and outrage; by scourging and beating with clubs: those were fortunate who escaped with exile (1). But if Alexandria was disturbed by the hostile excesses of the Arians, in Constantinople itself, the conflicting religious parties gave rise to the first of those popular tumults which so frequently, in later times, distracted and disgraced the city. Eusebius, formerly Bishop of Nicomedia, the main support of the Arian party, had risen to the episcopacy of the imperial city. His enemies reproached the worldly ambition which deserted an humbler for a more eminent see; but they were not less inclined

(1) Athanas. Oper., p. 112. 149. 350. 352., and the ecclesiastical historians in loc.

to contest this important post with the utmost activity. At his death the Athanasian party revived the claims of Paul, whom they asserted to have been canonically elected, and unjustly deposed from the see; the Arians supported Macedonius. The dispute spread from the church into the streets, from the clergy to the populace; blood was shed; the whole city was in arms on one part or the other.

Bloody  
quarrel at  
Constanti-  
nople.

The Emperor was at Antioch; he commanded Hermogenes, who was appointed to the command of the cavalry in Thrace, to pass through Constantinople, and expel the intruder Paul. Hermogenes, at the head of his soldiery, advanced to force Paul from the church. The populace rose; the soldiers were repelled; the general took refuge in a house, which was instantly set on fire; the mangled body of Hermogenes was dragged through the streets, and at length cast into the sea. Constantius heard this extraordinary intelligence at Antioch. The contempt of the imperial mandate; the murder of an imperial officer in the contested nomination of a bishop, were as yet so new in the annals of the world, as to fill him with equal astonishment and indignation. He mounted his horse, though it was winter and the mountain-passes were dangerous and difficult with snow; he hastened with the utmost speed to Constantinople. But the deep humiliation of the senate and the heads of the people, who prostrated themselves at his feet, averted his resentment: the people were punished by a diminution of the usual largess of corn. Paul was expelled; but, as though some blame adhered to both the conflicting parties, the election of Macedonius was not confirmed, although he was allowed to exercise the episcopal functions. Paul retired, first to Thessalonica, subsequently to the court of Constans.

The remoter consequences of the Athanasian controversy began to develop themselves at this early period. The Christianity of the East and the West gradually assumed a divergent and independent character. Though, during a short time, the Arianism of the Ostrogothic conquerors gave a temporary predominance in Italy to that creed, the West in general submitted, in uninquiring acquiescence, to the Trinitarianism of Athanasius. In the East, on the other hand, though the doctrines of Athanasius eventually obtained the superiority, the controversy gave birth to a long and unexhausted line of subordinate disputes. The East retained its mingled character of Oriental speculativeness and Greek subtlety. It could not abstain from investigating and analysing the divine nature, and the relations of Christ and the Holy Ghost to the Supreme Being. Macedonianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, with the fatal disputes relating to the procession of the Holy Ghost, during almost the last hours of the Byzantine empire, may be considered the lineal descendants of this prolific controversy. The opposition of the

Effects of  
the Trini-  
tarian con-  
troversy  
in the  
West.



East and West, of itself tended to increase the authority of that prelate, who assumed his acknowledged station as the head and representative of the Western churches. The commanding and popular part taken by the Bishop of Rome, in favour of Athanasius and his doctrines, enabled him to stand forth in undisputed superiority, as at once the chief of the Western episcopate, and the champion of orthodoxy. The age of Hosius, and his residence in a remote province, withdrew the only competitor for this superiority.

Athanasius took up his residence at Rome, and, under the protection of the Roman prelate, defied his adversaries to a new contest. Julius summoned the accusers of Athanasius to plead the cause before a council in Rome (1). The Eastern prelates altogether disclaimed his jurisdiction, and rejected his pretensions to rejudge the cause of a bishop already condemned by the council of Tyre. The answer of Julius is directed rather to the justification of Athanasius than to the assertion of his own authority. The synod of Rome solemnly acquitted Athanasius, Paul, and all their adherents.

The Western Emperor joined in the sentiments of his clergy. A second council at Milan, in the presence of Constans, confirmed the decree of Rome. Constans proposed to his brother to convoke a general council of both empires. A neutral or border ground was chosen for this decisive conflict. At Sardica met one hundred prelates from the West, from the East only seventy-five (2). Notwithstanding his age and infirmities, Hosius travelled from the extremity of the empire : he at once took the lead in the assembly ; and, it is remarkable that the Bishop of Rome, so zealous in the cause of Athanasius, alleged an excuse for his absence, which may warrant the suspicion that he was unwilling to be obscured in this important scene by the superior authority of Hosius. Five of the Western prelates, among whom were Ursacius of Singidunum and Valens of Mursa, embraced the Arian cause : the Arians complained of the defection of two bishops from their body, who betrayed their secret counsels to their adversaries (3). In all these councils, it appears not to have occurred, that, religion being a matter of faith, the suffrages of the majority could not possibly impose a creed upon a conscientious minority. The question had been too often agitated to expect that it could be placed in a new light.

On matters of fact, the suffrages of the more numerous party

(1) Julius is far from asserting any individual authority, or pontifical supremacy. "Why do you alone write?" "Because I represent the opinions of the bishops of Italy." Epist. Julian. Athanas. Op. i. 146.

The ecclesiastical historians, however, in the next century, assert that Rome claimed a right of adjudication. Γρεβίζουσιν οὖν τῷ ἐπισκοπῇ Ρώμης τοὺς τὰ καθ' ἑαυτοὺς.

ὁ δὲ ἀπεπρόνομα τῆς ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐκκλησίας ἐχούσης. Socr. E. H. ii. 15. Οἷα δὲ τῶν πάντων κηδεμονίας αὐτῷ προσήκουσιν διὰ τὴν ἀξίαν τοῦ θρόνου. Soz. E. H. iii. 8.

(2) By some accounts there were 100 Western bishops; 73 Eastern.

(3) Concilia Labbe, vol. iii. Athanas, contr. Arian, etc.

Athanasius at Rome.

Julius Bishop of Rome.

Synod at Rome.

A. D. 343. At Milan.

Council at Sardica. A. D. 345 — 6.

might have weight, in the personal condemnation for instance or the acquittal of Athanasius; but as these suffrages could not convince the understanding of those who voted on the other side, the theological decisions must of necessity be rejected, unless the minority would submit likewise to the humiliating confession of insincerity, ignorance, or precipitancy in judgment (1). The Arian minority did not await this issue; having vainly attempted to impede the progress of the council, by refusing to sanction the presence of persons excommunicated, they seceded to Philippopolis in Thrace. In these two cities sat the rival councils, each asserting itself the genuine representative of Christendom, issuing decrees, and anathematising their adversaries. The Arians are accused of maintaining their influence, even in the East, by acts of great cruelty. In Adrianople, in Alexandria, they enforced submission to their tenets by the scourge, and by heavy penalties (2).

Rival  
council at  
Philippo-  
polis.

The Western council at Milan accepted and ratified the decrees of the council of Sardica, absolving Athanasius of all criminality, and receiving his doctrines as the genuine and exclusive truths of the Gospel. On a sudden, affairs took a new turn; Constantius threw himself, as it were, at the feet of Athanasius, and in three successive letters, entreated him to resume his episcopal throne. The Emperor and the prelate (who had delayed at first to obey, either from fear or from pride, the flattering invitation), met at Antioch with mutual expressions of respect and cordiality (3). Constantius commanded all the accusations against Athanasius to be erased from the registers of the city. He commended the prelate to the people of Alexandria in terms of courtly flattery, which harshly contrast with his former, as well as with his subsequent, conduct to Athanasius. The Arian bishop, Gregory, was dead, and Athanasius, amid the universal joy, re-entered the city. The bishops crowded from all parts to salute and congratulate the prelate who had thus triumphed over the malice even of imperial enemies. Incense curled up in all the streets; the city was brilliantly illuminated. It was an ovation by the admirers of Athanasius; it is said to have been a Christian ovation; alms were lavished on the poor; every house resounded with prayer and thanksgiving as if it were a church; the triumph of Athanasius was completed by the recantation of Ursacius and Valens, two of his most powerful antagonists (4).

Reconci-  
liation of  
Constantius  
with  
Athana-  
sius.  
A. D. 349.

This sudden change in the policy of Constantius is scarcely ex-

(1) The Oriental bishops protested against the assumption of supremacy by the Western. *Novam legem introducere putaverunt, ut Orientales Episcopi ab Occidentalibus judicarentur. Apud Hilar. Fragm. iii.*

(2) The cause of Marcellus of Ancyra, whom the Eusebian party accused of Sabellianism, was throughout connected with that of Athanasius.

(3) The Emperor proposed to Athanasius to leave one church to the Arians at Alexandria; Athanasius dexterously eluded the request, by very fairly demanding that one church in Antioch, where the Arians predominated, should be set apart for those of his communion.

(4) Greg. Nazian. Enc. Athanas. Hist. Arian.

**A. D. 349.** plicable upon the alleged motives. It is ascribed to the detection of an infamous conspiracy against one of the Western bishops, deputed on a mission to Constantius. The aged prelate was charged with incontinence, but the accusation recoiled on its inventors. A man of infamous character, Onager the wild ass, the chief conductor of the plot, on being detected, avowed himself the agent of Stephen, the Arian bishop of Antioch. Stephen was ignominiously deposed from his see. Yet this single fact would scarcely have at once estranged the mind of Constantius from the interests of the Arian party; his subsequent conduct when, as Emperor of the whole world, he could again dare to display his deep-rooted hostility to Athanasius, induces the suspicion of political reasons. Constantius was about to be embarrassed with the Persian war; at this dangerous crisis, the admonitions of his brother, not unmingled with warlike menace, might enforce the expediency at least of a temporary reconciliation with Athanasius. The political troubles of three years suspended the religious strife. The war of Persia brought some fame to the arms of Constantius; and in the more honourable character, not of the antagonist, but the avenger of his murdered brother, the surviving son of Constantine again united the East and West under his sole dominion. The battle of Mursa, if we are to credit a writer somewhat more recent, was no less fatal to the interests of Athanasius than to the arms of Magnentius (1). Ursacius and Valens, after their recantation, had relapsed to Arianism. Valens was the Bishop of Mursa, and in the immediate neighbourhood of that town was fought the decisive battle. Constantius retired with Valens into the principal church, to assist with his prayers rather than with his directions or personal prowess, the success of his army. The agony of his mind may be conceived, during the long suspense of a conflict on which the sovereignty of the world depended, and in which the conquerors lost more men than the vanquished (2). Valens stood or knelt by his side; on a sudden, when the Emperor was wrought to the highest state of agitation, Valens proclaimed the tidings of his complete victory; intelligence communicated to the prelate by an angel from heaven. Whether Valens had anticipated the event by a bold fiction, or arranged some plan for obtaining rapid information, he appeared from that time to the Emperor as a man especially favoured by Heaven, a prophet, and one of good omen.

**A. D. 351 to 355.** But either the fears of the Emperor, or the caution of the Arian party, delayed yet for three or four years to execute their revenge on Athanasius. They began with a less illustrious victim. Philip, the præfect of the East, received instructions to expel Paul, and to replace Macedonius on the episcopal throne of Constantinople.

(1) Sulpicius Severus, ii. c. 54.

(2) Magnentius is said by Zonaras, to have

sacrificed a girl, to propitiate the gods on this momentous occasion. Lib. xiii. t. ii. p. 16, 17.



Philip remembered the fate of Hermogenes; he secured himself in the thermæ of Zeuxippus, and summoned the prelate to his presence. He then communicated his instructions, and frightened or persuaded the aged Paul to consent to be secretly transported in a boat over the Bosphorus. In the morning, Philip appeared in his car, with Macedonius by his side in the pontifical attire; he drove directly to the church, but the soldiers were obliged to hew their way through the dense and resisting crowd to the altar. Macedonius passed over the murdered bodies (three thousand are said to have fallen) to the throne of the Christian prelate. Paul was carried in chains first to Emesa, afterwards to a wild town in the deserts about Mount Taurus. He had disappeared from the sight of his followers, and it is certain that he died in these remote regions. The Arians gave out that he died a natural death. It was the general belief of the Athanasians that his death was hastened, and even that he had been strangled by the hands of the præfect Philip (1).

Paul de-  
posed  
from the  
bishopric  
of Constan-  
tinople.  
Macedo-  
nius rein-  
stated.

But before the decisive blow was struck against Athanasius, Constantius endeavoured to subdue the West to the Arian opinions. The Emperor, released from the dangers of war, occupied his triumphant leisure in Christian controversy. He seemed determined to establish his sole dominion over the religion as well as the civil obedience of his subjects. The Western bishops firmly opposed the conqueror of Magnentius. At the councils, first of Arles and afterwards of Milan, they refused to subscribe the condemnation of Athanasius, or to communicate with the Arians. Liberius, the new Bishop of Rome, refused the timid and disingenuous compromise to which his representative at Arles, Vincent, deacon of Rome, had agreed; to assent to the condemnation of Athanasius, if, at the same time, a decisive anathema should be issued against the tenets of Arius. At Milan, the bishops boldly asserted the independence of the church upon the empire. The Athanasian party forgot, or chose not to remember, that they had unanimously applauded the interference of Constantine, when, after the Nicene council, he drove the Arian bishops into exile. Thus it has always been: the sect or party which has the civil power in its favour is embarrassed with no doubts as to the legality of its interference: when hostile, it resists as an unwarrantable aggression on its own freedom, that which it has not scrupled to employ against its adversaries.

Councils  
of Arles  
and Milan.

Persecu-  
tion of  
Liberius,  
Bishop of  
Rome.

The new charges against Athanasius were of very different degrees of magnitude and probability. He was accused of exciting the hostility of Constans against his brother. The fact that Constans had threatened to reinstate the exiled prelate by force of arms might give weight to this charge; but the subsequent reconciliation, the gracious reception of Athanasius by the Emperor, the public edicts

New  
charges  
against  
Athana-  
sius.

(1) Athenas. Oper. i. 322. 348. Socrat. E. H. ii. 26.

in his favour, had, in all justice, cancelled the guilt, if there were really guilt, in this undue influence over the mind of Constans. He was accused of treasonable correspondence with the usurper Magnentius. Athanasius repelled this charge with natural indignation. He must be a monster of ingratitude, worthy a thousand deaths, if he had leagued with the murderer of his benefactor, Constans. He defied his enemies to the production of any letters; he demanded the severest investigation, the strictest examination, of his own secretaries or those of Magnentius. The descent is rapid from these serious charges to that of having officiated in a new and splendid church, the Cæsarean, without the permission of the Emperor; and the exercising a paramount and almost monarchical authority over the churches along the whole course of the Nile, even beyond his legitimate jurisdiction. The first was strangely construed into an intentional disrespect to the Emperor, the latter might fairly be attributed to the zeal of Athanasius for the extension of Christianity. Some of these points might appear beyond the jurisdiction of an ecclesiastical tribunal; and in the council of Milan there seems to have been an inclination to separate the cause of Athanasius from that of his doctrine. As at Arles, some proposed to abandon the person of Athanasius to the will of the Emperor, if a general condemnation should be passed against the tenets of Arius.

Council of  
Milan.

Three hundred ecclesiastics formed the council of Milan. Few of these were from the East. The Bishop of Rome did not appear in person to lead the orthodox party. His chief representative was Lucifer of Cagliari, a man of ability, but of violent temper and unguarded language. The Arian faction was headed by Ursacius and Valens, the old adversaries of Athanasius, and by the Emperor himself. Constantius, that the proceedings might take place more immediately under his own superintendence, adjourned the assembly from the church to the palace. This unseemly intrusion of a layman in the deliberations of the clergy, unfortunately, was not without precedent. Those who had proudly hailed the entrance of Constantine into the synod of Nice could not, consistently, deprecate the presence of his son at Milan.

A. D. 355.

The controversy became a personal question between the Emperor and his refractory subject. The emperor descended into the arena, and mingled in all the fury of the conflict. Constantius was not content with assuming the supreme place as Emperor, or interfering in the especial province of the bishops, the theological question, he laid claim to direct inspiration. He was commissioned by a vision from Heaven to restore peace to the afflicted church. The scheme of doctrine which he proposed was asserted by the Western bishops to be strongly tainted with Arianism. The prudence of the Athanasian party was not equal to their firmness and courage. The obsequious and almost adoring court of the Emperor

must have stood aghast at the audacity of the ecclesiastical synod. Their language was that of vehement invective, rather than dignified dissent or calm remonstrance. Constantius, concealed behind a curtain, listened to the debate; he heard his own name coupled with that of heretic, of Antichrist. His indignation now knew no bounds. He proclaimed himself the champion of the Arian doctrines, and the accuser of Athanasius. Yet flatteries, persuasions, bribes, menaces, penalties, exiles, were necessary to extort the assent of the resolute assembly. Then they became conscious of the impropriety of a lay Emperor's intrusion into the debates of an ecclesiastical synod. They demanded a free council, in which the Emperor should neither preside in person nor by his commissary. They lifted up their hands, and entreated the angry Constantius not to mingle up the affairs of the state and the church (1). Three prelates, Lucifer of Cagliari, Eusebius of Vercellæ, Dionysius of Milan, were sent into banishment, to places remote from each other, and the most inhospitable regions of the empire. Liberius, the Roman pontiff, rejected with disdain the presents of the Emperor; he resisted with equal firmness his persuasions and his acts of violence.

Though his palace was carefully closed and garrisoned by some of his faithful flock, Liberius was seized at length, and carried to Milan. He withstood, somewhat contemptuously, the personal entreaties and arguments of the Emperor (2). He rejected with disdain the imperial offers of money for his journey, and told him to keep it to pay his army. The same offer was made by Eusebius the eunuch: — “Does a sacrilegious robber like thee think to give alms to me, as to a mendicant?” He was exiled to Berbea, a city of Thrace. An Arian prelate, Felix, was forced upon the unwilling city. But two years of exile broke the spirit of Liberius. He began to listen to the advice of the Arian bishop of Berbea; the solitude, the cold climate, and the discomforts of this uncongenial region, had more effect than the presents or the menaces of the Emperor. He signed the Arian formulary of Sirmium; he assented to the condemnation of Athanasius. The fall of the aged Hosius increased the triumph of the Arians. Some of the Catholic writers reproach with undue bitterness the weakness of an old man, whose nearer approach to the grave, they assert, ought to have confirmed him in his inalienable fidelity to Christ. But even Christianity has no power over that mental imbecility which accompanies the decay of physical strength; and this act of feebleness ought not, for an instant, to be set against the unblemished virtue of a whole life.

Constantius, on his visit to Rome, was astonished by an address, presented by some of the principal females of the city in their most

Fall of  
Liberius.

Fall of  
Hosius.

Reception  
of Con-  
stantius at  
Rome.

(1) Μηδὲ ἀναμίσγειν τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν  
τῇ τῆς ἐκκλησίας διατάγῃ. Athanas. ad  
Mon. c. 34. 36. Compare c. 52.

(2) Theodoret, iv. 16.



splended attire, to entreat the restoration of Liberius. The Emperor offered to re-admit Liberius to a co-ordinate authority with the Arian bishop, Felix. The females rejected with indignant disdain this dishonourable compromise; and when Constantius commanded a similar proposition to be publicly read in the circus at the time of games, he was answered by a general shout, "One God, one Christ, one bishop."

Had then the Christians, if this story be true, already overcome their aversion to the public games? or are we to suppose that the whole populace of Rome took an interest in the appointment of the Christian pontiff?

Orders to  
remove  
Athanasius.

Athanasius awaited in tranquil dignity the bursting storm. He had eluded the imperial summons to appear at Milan, upon the plea that it was ambiguous and obscure. Constantius, either from some lingering remorse, from reluctance to have his new condemnatory ordinances confronted with his favourable, and almost adulatory, testimonies to the innocence of Athanasius, or from fear lest a religious insurrection in Alexandria and Egypt should embarrass the government, and cut off the supplies of corn from the Eastern capital, refused to issue any written order for the deposal and expulsion of Athanasius. He chose, apparently, to retain the power, if convenient, of disowning his emissaries. Two secretaries were despatched with a verbal message, commanding his abdication. Athanasius treated the imperial officers with the utmost courtesy; but respectfully demanded their written instructions. A kind of suspension of hostilities seems to have been agreed upon, till further instructions could be obtained from the Emperor. But in the mean time, Syrianus, the duke of the province, was drawing the troops from all parts of Libya and Egypt to invest and occupy the city. A force of 5000 men was thought necessary to depose a peaceable Christian prelate. The great events in the life of Athanasius, as we have already seen on two occasions, seem, either designedly or of themselves, to take a highly dramatic form. It was midnight, and the archbishop, surrounded by the more devout of his flock, was performing the solemn ceremony, previous to the sacrament service of the next day, in the church of St. Theonas. Suddenly the sound of trumpets, the trampling of steeds, the clash of arms, the bursting the bolts of the doors, interrupted the silent devotions of the assembly. The bishop on his throne, in the depth of the choir, on which fell the dim light of the lamps, beheld the gleaming arms of the soldiery, as they burst into the nave of the church. The archbishop, as the ominous sounds grew louder, commanded the chaunting of the 135th (136th) Psalm. The choristers' voices swelled into the solemn strain:—"Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious;" the people took up the burthen, "For his mercy endureth for ever!" The clear, full voices of the

Tumult in  
the church  
of Alex-  
andria.

congregation rose over the wild tumult, now without, and now within, the church.

A discharge of arrows commenced the conflict; and Athanasius calmly exhorted his people to continue their only defensive measures, their prayers to their Almighty Protector. Syrianus at the same time ordered the soldiers to advance. The cries of the wounded; the groans of those who were trampled down in attempting to force their way out through the soldiery; the shouts of the assailants, mingled in wild and melancholy uproar. But before the soldiers had reached the end of the sanctuary, the pious disobedience of his clergy, and of a body of monks, hurried the archbishop by some secret passage out of the tumult. His escape appeared little less than miraculous to his faithful followers. The riches of the altar, the sacred ornaments of the church, and even the consecrated virgins, were abandoned to the licence of an exasperated soldiery. The Catholics in vain drew up an address to the Emperor, appealing to his justice against this sacrilegious outrage; they suspended the arms of the soldiery, which had been left on the floor of the church, as a reproachful memorial of the violence. Constantius confirmed the acts of his officers (1).

The Arians were prepared to replace the deposed prelate; their choice fell on another Cappadocian more savage and unprincipled than the former one. Constantius commended George of Cappadocia to the people of Alexandria, as a prelate above praise, the wisest of teachers, the fittest guide to the kingdom of heaven. His adversaries paint him in the blackest colours; the son of a fuller, he had been in turns a parasite, a receiver of taxes, a bankrupt. Ignorant of letters, savage in manners, he was taken up, while leading a vagabond life, by the Arian prelate of Antioch, and made a priest before he was a Christian. He employed the collections made for the poor in bribing the eunuchs of the palace. But he possessed, no doubt, great worldly ability; he was without fear and without remorse. He entered Alexandria environed by the troops of Syrianus. His presence let loose the rabid violence of party; the Arians exacted ample vengeance for their long period of depression; houses were plundered; monasteries burned; tombs broken open, to search for concealed Athanasians, or for the prelate himself, who still eluded their pursuit; bishops were insulted; virgins scourged; the soldiery encouraged to break up every meeting of the Catholics by violence, and even by inhuman tortures. The Duke Sebastian, at the head of 3000 troops, charged a meeting of the Athanasian Christians: no barbarity was too revolting; they are said to have employed instruments of torture to compel them to Christian unity with the Arians; females were scourged with the

George of  
Cappa-  
docia.

(1) Athanas. *Apol. de Fugâ*, vol. i, p. 334: ad Monachos. 373. 378. 393. 395.; ad Const. 307. 310. Tillemont, *Vie d'Athanase*.

prickly branches of the palm-tree. The Pagans readily transferred their allegiance, so far as allegiance was demanded; while the savage and ignorant among them rejoiced in the occasion for plunder and cruelty. Others hailed these feuds, and almost anticipated the triumphant restoration of their own religion. Men, they thought, must grow weary and disgusted with a religion productive of so much crime, bloodshed, and misery. Echoing back the language of the Athanasians, they shouted out—"Long life to the Emperor Constantius, and the Arians who have abjured Christianity." And Christianity they seem to have abjured, though not in the sense intended by their adversaries. They had abjured all Christian humanity, holiness, and peace.

The avarice of George was equal to his cruelty. Exactions were necessary to maintain his interest with the eunuchs, to whom he owed his promotion. The prelate of Alexandria forced himself into the secular affairs of the city. He endeavoured to secure a monopoly of the nitron produced in the lake Mareotis, of the salt-works, and of the papyrus. He became a manufacturer of those painted coffins which were still in use among the Egyptians. Once he was expelled by a sudden insurrection of the people, who surrounded the church, in which he was officiating, and threatened to tear him in pieces. He took refuge in the court, which was then at Sirmium, and a few months beheld him reinstated by the command of his faithful patron the Emperor (1). A reinstated tyrant is, in general, the most cruel oppressor; and, unless party violence has blackened the character of George of Cappadocia beyond even its ordinary injustice, the addition of revenge, and the haughty sense of impunity, derived from the imperial protection, to the evil passions already developed in his soul, rendered him a still more intolerable scourge to the devoted city.

Every where the Athanasian bishops were expelled from their sees; they were driven into banishment. The desert was constantly sounding with the hymns of these pious and venerable exiles, as they passed along, loaded with chains, to the remote and savage place of their destination; many of them bearing the scars, and wounds, and mutilations, which had been inflicted upon them by their barbarous persecutors, to enforce their compliance with the Arian doctrines.

Athanasius, after many strange adventures; having been concealed in a dry cistern, and in the chamber of a beautiful woman, who attended him with the most officious devotion (his awful character was not even tinged with the breath of suspicion), found refuge at length among the monks of the desert. Egypt is bordered on all sides by wastes of sand, or by barren rocks, broken into

Escape  
and retreat  
of Atha-  
nasius.

A. D. 356.

(1) He was at Sirmium, May, 359; restored in October.



caves and intricate passes ; and all these solitudes were now peopled by the fanatic followers of the hermit Antony. They were all devoted to the opinions, and attached to the person, of Athanasius. The austerities of the prelate extorted their admiration : as he had been the great example of a dignified, active, and zealous bishop, so was he now of an ascetic and mortified solitary. The most inured to self-inflicted tortures of mind and body found themselves equalled, if not outdone, in their fasts and austerities by the lofty Patriarch of Alexandria. Among these devoted adherents, his security was complete : their passionate reverence admitted not the fear of treachery. The more active and inquisitive the search of his enemies, he had only to plunge deeper into the inaccessible and inscrutable desert. From this solitude Athanasius himself is supposed sometimes to have issued forth, and, passing the seas, to have traversed even parts of the West, animating his followers, and confirming the faith of his whole widely disseminated party. His own language implies his personal, though secret presence at the councils of Seleucia and Rimini (1).

From the desert, unquestionably, came forth many of those writings which must have astonished the Heathen world by their unprecedented boldness. For the first time since the foundation of the empire, the government was more or less publicly assailed in addresses, which arraigned its measures as unjust, and as transgressing its legitimate authority, and which did not spare the person of the reigning Emperor. In the West, as well as in the East, Constantius was assailed with equal freedom of invective. The book of Hilary of Poitiers against Constantius, is said not to have been made public till after the death of the Emperor ; but it was most likely circulated among the Catholics of the West ; and the author exposed himself to the activity of hostile informers, and the indiscretion of fanatical friends. The Emperor is declared to be Antichrist, a tyrant, not in secular, but likewise in religious affairs ; the sole object of his reign was to make a free gift to the devil of the whole world, for which Christ had suffered (2). Lucifer of Cagliari, whose

Hilary of  
Poitiers.

Lucifer of  
Cagliari.

(1) Athanas. Oper. vol. i. p. 869. Compare Tillemont, Vie d'Athanas.

(2) Nihil prorsus aliud egit, quam ut orbem terrarum, pro quo Christus passus est, diabolo condonaret. Adv. Constant. c. 15. Hilary's highest indignation is excited by the gentle and insidious manner with which he confesses that Constantius endeavoured to compass his unholy end. He would not honour them with the dignity of martyrs, but he used the prevailing persuasion of bribes, flatteries, and honours—Non dorsa cedit, sed ventrem palpat; non trudit carcere ad libertatem, sed intra palatium honorat ad servitutem; non latera vexat, sed cor occupat \*\* non contendit ne vincatur, sed adulatur ut dominetur. There are several other remarkable passages in this tract. Constantius wished to confine the creed to the language of scripture. This was rejected, as infringing on the authority

of the bishops, and the forms of Apostolic preaching. Nolo, inquit, verba quæ non scripta sunt dici. Hoc tandem rogo, quis episcopis jubeat et quis apostolicæ prædicationis vetet fornax? c. 16. Among the sentences ascribed to the Arians, which so much shocked the Western bishops, there is one which is evidently the argument of a strong anti-materialist asserting the sole existence of the Father, and that the terms of son and generation, etc., are not to be received in a literal sense. Erat Deus quod est. Pater non erat, quia neque ei filius; nam si filius, necesse est ut et femina sit, etc. One phrase has a singularly Oriental, I would say, Indian cast. How much soever the Son expands himself towards the knowledge of the Father, so much the Father super-expands himself, lest he should be known by the Son. Quantum enim Filius se extendit cognoscere Patrem, tantum Pater superextendit se, ne cogni-

violent temper afterwards distracted the Western church with a schism, is now therefore repudiated by the common consent of all parties. But Athanasius speaks in ardent admiration of the intemperate writings of this passionate man, and once describes him as inflamed by the spirit of God. Lucifer, in his banishment, sent five books full of the most virulent invective to the Emperor. Constantius—it was the brighter side of his religious character—received these addresses with almost contemptuous equanimity. He sent a message to Lucifer, to demand if he was the author of these works. Lucifer replied not merely by an intrepid acknowledgment of his former writings, but by a sixth, in still more unrestrained and exaggerated language. Constantius was satisfied with banishing him to the Thebaid. Athanasius himself, who in his public vindication addressed to Constantius, maintained the highest respect for the imperial dignity, in his *Epistle to the Solitaries* gives free vent and expression to his vehement and contemptuous sentiments. His re-cluse friends are cautioned, indeed, not to disclose the dangerous document, in which the tyrants of the Old Testament, Pharaoh, Ahab, Belshazzar, are contrasted, to his disadvantage, with the base, the cruel, the hypocritical Constantius. It is curious to observe this new element of freedom, however at present working in a concealed, irregular, and, perhaps, still-guarded manner, mingling itself up with, and partially up-heaving, the general prostration of the human mind. The Christian, or, in some respects, it might be more justly said, the hierarchical principle, was entering into the constitution of human society, as an antagonist power to that of the civil sovereign. The Christian community was no longer a separate republic, governed within by its own laws, yet submitting, in all but its religious observances, to the general ordinances. By the establishment of Christianity under Constantine, and the gradual reunion of two sections of mankind into one civil society, those two powers, that of the church and the state, became co-ordinate authorities, which, if any difference should arise between the heads of the respective supremacies,—if the Emperor and the dominant party in Christendom should take opposite sides, led to inevitable collision. This crisis had already arrived. An Arian emperor was virtually excluded from a community in which the Athanasian doctrines prevailed. The son of Constantine belonged to an excommunicated class, to whom the dominant party refused the name of Christians. Thus these two despotisms, both founded on opinion (for obedience to the imperial

tus Filio sit. c. 13. The parties, at least in the West, were speaking two totally distinct languages. It would be unjust to Hilary not to acknowledge the beautiful and Christian sentiments scattered through his two former addresses to Constantius, which are firm, but respectful; and if rigidly, yet sincerely, dogmatic. His plea for toleration, if not very consistently maintained,

is expressed with great force and simplicity. Deus cognitionem sui docuit potius quam exegit. \* \* Deus universitatis est Dominus; non requirit coactam confessionem. Nostra potius non sua causa venerandus est \* \* simplicitate querendus est, confessione discendus est, charitate amandus est, timore venerandus est, voluntatis probitate retinendus est. Lib. i. c. 6.

authority was rooted in the universal sentiment), instead of gently counteracting and mitigating each other, came at once into direct and angry conflict. The Emperor might with justice begin to suspect that, instead of securing a peaceful and submissive ally, he had raised up a rival or a master; for the son of Constantine was thus in his turn disdainfully ejected from the society which his father had incorporated with the empire. It may be doubted how far the violences and barbarities ascribed by the Catholics to their Arian foes may be attributed to the indignation of the civil power at this new and determined resistance. Though Constantius might himself feel or affect a compassionate disdain at these unusual attacks on his person and dignity, the general feeling of the Heathen population, and many of the local governors, might resist this contumacious contempt of the supreme authority. It is difficult otherwise to account for the general tumult excited by these disputes in Alexandria, in Constantinople, and in Rome, where at least a very considerable part of the population had no concern in the religious quarrel. The old animosity against Christianity would array itself under the banners of one of the conflicting parties, or take up the cause of the insulted sovereignty of the Emperor. The Athanasian party constantly assert that the Arians courted, or at least did not decline, the invidious alliance of the Pagans.

But in truth, in the horrible cruelties perpetrated during these unhappy divisions, it was the same savage ferocity of manners, which half a century before had raged against the Christian church, which now apparently raged in its cause (1). The abstruse tenets of the Christian theology became the ill-understood, perhaps unintelligible, watchwords of violent and disorderly men. The rabble of Alexandria and other cities availed themselves of the commotion to give loose to their suppressed passion for the excitement of plunder and bloodshed. How far the doctrines of Christianity had worked down into the populace of the great cities cannot be ascertained, or even conjectured; its spirit had not in the least mitigated their ferocity and inhumanity. If Christianity is accused as the immediate

Mutual accusations of cruelty.

(1) See the depositions of the bishops assembled at Sardica, of the violence which they had themselves endured at the hands of the Arians. Alii autem gladium signa, plagas et cicatrices ostendebant. Alii se fame ab ipsis excruciatos querebantur. Et hæc non ignobiles testificabantur viri, sed de ecclesiis omnibus electi propter quas huc convenerunt, res gestas edocebant, milites armatos, populos cum fustibus, iudicum minas, falsarum literarum suppositiones.

\* Ad hæc virginum nudationes, incendia ecclesiarum, carceres adversos ministros Dei. Hilar. Fragm. Op. Hist. ii. c. 4.

The Arians retort the same accusations of violence, cruelty, and persecution, against Athanasius. They say—Per vim, per cædem, per bellum, Alexandrinorum ecclesias depredatus; — and this, per pugnas et cædes gentium. De-

cretum Synodi Orientalium Episcoporum apud Sardicam, apud S. Hilarium.

Immensa autem confluerat ad Sardicam multitudo sceleratorum omnium et perditorum, adventantium de Constantinopoli, de Alexandria, qui rei homicidiorum, rei sanguinis, rei cædis, rei latrociniorum, rei prædæ, rei spoliiorum, nefandorumque omnium sacrilegiorum et criminum rei; qui altaria confrugerunt, ecclesias incenderunt, domosque privatorum compilaverunt; profanatores mysteriorum, proditoresque sacramentorum Christi; qui impiam sceleratamque hæreticorum doctrinam contra ecclesiæ fidem asserentes, sapientissimos presbyteros Dei, diacones, sacerdotes, atrociter demactaverunt. Ibid. 19. And this protest, full of these tremendous charges, was signed by the eighty seceding Eastern bishops.



exciting cause of these disastrous scenes, the predisposing principle was in that uncivilised nature of man, which not merely was unalloyed by the gentle and humanising tenets of the Gospel, but, as it has perpetually done, pressed the Gospel itself, as it were, into its own unhallowed service.

The severe exclusiveness of dogmatic theology attained its height in this controversy. Hitherto, the Catholic and heretical doctrines had receded from each other at the first outset, as it were, and drawn off to opposite and irreconcilable extremes. The heretics had wandered away into the boundless regions of speculation; they had differed on some of the most important elementary principles of belief; they had rarely admitted any common basis for argument. Here the contending parties set out from nearly the same principles, admitted the same authority, and seemed, whatever their secret bias or inclination, to differ only on the import of one word. Their opinions, like parallel lines in mathematics, seemed to be constantly approximating, yet found it impossible to unite. The Athanasians taunted the Arians with the infinite variations in their belief: Athanasius recounts no less than eleven creeds. But the Arians might have pleaded their anxiety to reconcile themselves to the church, their earnest solicitude to make every advance towards a reunion, provided they might be excused the adoption of the one obnoxious word, the *Homousion*, or *Consubstantialism*. But the inflexible orthodoxy of Athanasius will admit no compromise; nothing less than complete unity, not merely of expression, but of mental conception, will satisfy the rigour of the ecclesiastical dictator, who will permit no single letter, and, as far as he can detect it, no shadow of thought, to depart from his peremptory creed. He denounces his adversaries, for the least deviation, as enemies of Christ; he presses them with consequences drawn from their opinions; and, instead of spreading wide the gates of Christianity, he seems to unbar them with jealous reluctance, and to admit no one without the most cool and inquisitorial scrutiny into the most secret arcana of his belief.

Athanasius as a writer.

In the writings of Athanasius is embodied the perfection of polemic divinity. His style, indeed, has no splendour, no softness, nothing to kindle the imagination, or melt the heart. Acute, even to subtilty, he is too earnest to degenerate into scholastic trifling. It is stern logic, addressed to the reason of those who admitted the authority of Christianity. There is no dispassionate examination, no candid philosophic inquiry, no calm statement of his adversaries' case, no liberal acknowledgment of the infinite difficulties of the subject, scarcely any consciousness of the total insufficiency of human language to trace the question to its depths; all is peremptory, dictatorial, imperious; the severe conviction of the truth of his own opinions, and the inference that none but culpable motives, either

of pride, or strife, or ignorance, can blind his adversaries to their cogent and irrefragable certainty. Athanasius walks on the narrow and perilous edge of orthodoxy with a firmness and confidence which it is impossible not to admire. It cannot be doubted that he was deeply, intimately, persuaded that the vital power and energy, the truth, the consolatory force of Christianity, entirely depended on the unquestionable elevation of the Saviour to the most absolute equality with the Parent Godhead. The ingenuity with which he follows out his own views of the consequences of their errors is wonderfully acute; but the thought constantly occurs, whether a milder and more conciliating tone would not have healed the wounds of afflicted Christianity; whether his lofty spirit is not conscious that his native element is that of strife rather than of peace (1).

Though nothing can contrast more strongly with the expansive and liberal spirit of primitive Christianity than the repulsive tone of this exclusive theology, yet this remarkable phasis of Christianity seems to have been necessary, and not without advantage to the permanence of the religion. With the civilisation of mankind, Christianity was about to pass through the ordeal of those dark ages which followed the irruption of the barbarians. During this period, Christianity was to subsist as the conservative principle of social order and the sacred charities of life, the sole, if not always faithful, guardian of ancient knowledge, of letters, and of arts. But in order to preserve its own existence, it assumed, of necessity, another form. It must have a splendid and imposing ritual, to command the barbarous minds of its new proselytes, and one which might be performed by an illiterate priesthood; for the mass of the priesthood could not but be involved in the general darkness of the times. It must likewise have brief and definite formularies of doctrine. As the original languages, and even the Latin, fell into disuse, and before the modern languages of Europe were sufficiently formed to admit of translations, the sacred writings receded from general use; they became the depositaries of Christian doctrine, totally inaccessible to the laity, and almost as much so to the lower clergy. Creeds therefore became of essential importance to compress the leading points of Christian doctrine into a small compass. And as the barbarous and ignorant mind cannot endure the vague and the indefinite, so it was essential that the main points of doctrine should be fixed and cast into plain and emphatic propositions. The theological language was firmly established before the violent breaking up of society; and no more was required of the barbarian convert than to accept with uninquiring submission the established formulary of the faith, and gaze in awe-struck veneration at the solemn ceremonial.

Necessity  
of creeds  
during the  
succeed-  
ing cen-  
turies.

(1) At a later period, Athanasius seems to have been less rigidly exclusive against the Semi-Arians. Compare Möhler, ii. p. 230.

Influence  
of Athana-  
sian con-  
troversy  
on the  
growth of  
the papal  
power.

The Athanasian controversy powerfully contributed to establish the supremacy of the Roman pontiff. It became almost a contest between Eastern and Western Christendom; at least the West was neither divided like the East, nor submitted with the same comparatively willing obedience, to the domination of Arianism under the imperial authority. It was necessary that some one great prelate should take the lead in this internecine strife. The only Western bishop whom his character would designate as this leader was Hosius, the Bishop of Cordova. But age had now disqualified this good man, whose moderation, abilities, and probably important services to Christianity in the conversion of Constantine, had recommended him to the common acceptance of the Christian world, as president of the council of Nice. Where this acknowledged superiority of character and talent was wanting, the dignity of the see would command the general respect; and what see could compete, at least, in the West, with Rome? Antioch, Alexandria, or Constantinople, could alone rival, in pretensions to Christian supremacy, the old metropolis of the empire: and those sees were either fiercely contested, or occupied by Arian prelates. Athanasius himself, by his residence, at two separate periods, at Rome, submitted as it were his cause to the Roman pontiff. Rome became the centre of the ecclesiastical affairs of the West; and, since the Trinitarian opinions eventually triumphed through the whole of Christendom, the firmness and resolution with which the Roman pontiffs, notwithstanding the temporary fall of Liberius, adhered to the orthodox faith; their uncompromising attachment to Athanasius, who, by degrees, was sanctified and canonised in the memory of Christendom, might be one groundwork for that belief in their infallibility, which, however it would have been repudiated by Cyprian, and never completely prevailed in the East, became throughout the West the inalienable spiritual heirloom of the Roman pontiffs. Christian history will hereafter show how powerfully this monarchical principle if not established, yet greatly strengthened, by these consequences of the Athanasian controversy, tended to consolidate, and so to maintain, in still expanding influence, the Christianity of Europe (1).

Superiority of  
Arianism.

This conflict continued with unabated vigour till the close of the reign of Constantius. Arianism gradually assumed the ascendant, through the violence and the arts of the Emperor; all the more distinguished of the orthodox bishops were in exile, or, at least, in

(1) The orthodox Synod of Sardica admits the superior dignity of the successors of St. Peter. Hoc enim optimum et valde congruentissimum esse videbitur, si ad caput, id est, ad Petri Apostoli sedem, de singulis quibusque provinciis Domini referant sacerdotes. Epist. Syn. Sard. apud Hilarium, *Fragm. Oper. Hist.* ii. c. 9. It was disclaimed with equal distinctness by the seceding Arians. Novam legem introducere putaverunt, ut Orientales Episcopi ab Occidentalibus

judicaretur. *Fragm.* iii. c. 12. In a subsequent clause, they condemn Julius, Bishop of Rome, by name. It is difficult to calculate the effect which would commonly be produced on men's minds by their involving in one common cause the two tenets, which, in fact, bore no relation to each other,—the orthodox belief in the Trinity, and the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. Sozomen, iv. 11. 13. Theodoret, ii. 17. Philostorgius, iv. 3.



disgrace. Though the personal influence of Athanasius was still felt throughout Christendom, his obscure place of concealment was probably unknown to the greater part of his own adherents. The aged Hosius had died in his apostasy. Hilary of Poitiers, the bishop of Milan, and the violent Lucifer of Cagliari, were in exile, and, though Constantius had consented to the return of Liberius to his see, he had returned with the disgrace of having consented to sign the new formulary framed at Sirmium, where the term, *Consubstantial*, if not rejected, was, at least, suppressed. Yet the popularity of Liberius was undiminished, and the whole city indignantly rejected the insidious proposition of Constantius, that Liberius and his rival Felix should rule the see with conjoint authority. The parties had already come to blows, and even to bloodshed, when Felix, who it was admitted, had never swerved from the creed of Nice, and whose sole offence was entering into communion with the Arians, either from moderation, or conscious of the inferiority of his party, withdrew to a neighbouring city, where he soon closed his days, and relieved the Christians of Rome from the apprehension of a rival pontiff. The unbending resistance of the Athanasians was no doubt confirmed, not merely by the variations in the Arian creed, but by the new opinions which they considered its legitimate offspring, and which appeared to justify their worst apprehensions of its inevitable consequences. Aetius formed a new sect, which not merely denied the consubstantiality, but the similitude of the Son to the Father. He was not only not of the same, but of a totally different, nature. Aetius, according to the account of his adversaries, was a bold and unprincipled adventurer (1); and the career of a person of this class is exemplified in his life. The son of a soldier, at one time condemned to death and to the confiscation of his property, Aetius became a humble artisan, first as a worker in copper, afterwards in gold. His dishonest practices obliged him to give up the trade, but not before he had acquired some property. He attached himself to Paulinus, Bishop of Antioch; was expelled from the city by his successor; studied grammar at Anazarba; was encouraged by the Arian bishop of that see, named Athanasius; returned to Antioch; was ordained deacon; and again expelled the city. Discomfited in a public disputation with a Gnostic, he retired to Alexandria, where, being exercised in the art of rhetoric, he revenged himself on a Manichean, who died of shame. He then became a public itinerant teacher, practising, at the same time, his lucrative art of a goldsmith. The Arians rejected Aetius with no

Heresy of  
Aetius

(1) Socrates, ii. 35. Sozomen, iii. 15., iv. 12. Philostorg. iii. 15. 17. Suidas, voc. *AETIOΣ*. Epiphani. Hæres. 76. Gregor. Nyss. contra Eunom.

The most curious part in the History of Aetius is his attachment to the Aristotelian philosophy. With him appears to have begun the long strife

between Aristotelianism and Platonism in the church. Aetius, to prove his unimagi-native doctrines, employed the severe and prosaic categories of Aristotle, repudiating the prevailing Platonic mode of argument used by Origen and Clement of Alexandria. Socrates, ii. c. 35.

Of Macedonius.

less earnest indignation than the orthodox, but they could not escape being implicated, as it were, in his unpopularity; and the odious Anomeans, those who denied the *similitude* of the Son to the Father, brought new discredit even on the more temperate partisans of the Arian creed. Another heresiarch, of a higher rank, still further brought disrepute on the Arian party. Macedonius, the Bishop of Constantinople, to the Arian tenet of the inequality of the Son to the Father, added the total denial of the divinity of the Holy Ghost.

Council still followed council. Though we may not concur with the Arian bishops in ascribing to their adversaries the whole blame of this perpetual tumult and confusion in the Christian world, caused by these incessant assemblages of the clergy, there must have been much melancholy truth in their statement. "The East and the West are in a perpetual state of restlessness and disturbance. Deserting our spiritual charges; abandoning the people of God; neglecting the preaching of the Gospel; we are hurried about from place to place, sometimes to great distances, some of us infirm with age, with feeble constitutions or ill health, and are sometimes obliged to leave our sick brethren on the road. The whole administration of the empire, of the Emperor himself, the tribunes, and the commanders, at this fearful crisis of the state, are solely occupied with the lives and the condition of the bishops. The people are by no means unconcerned. The whole brotherhood watches in anxious suspense the event of these troubles; the establishment of post-horses is worn out by our journeyings; and all on account of a few wretches, who, if they had the least remaining sense of religion, would say with the Prophet Jonah, 'Take us up and cast us into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for we know that it is on our account that this great tempest is upon you (1).'"

Council of Rimini.

The synod at Sirmium had no effect in reconciling the differences, or affirming the superiority of either party. A double council was appointed, of the Eastern prelates at Seleucia, of the Western at Rimini. The Arianism of the Emperor himself had by this time degenerated still farther from the creed of Nice. Eudoxus, who had espoused the Anomean doctrines of Aetius, ruled his untractable but passive mind. The council of Rimini consisted of at least 400 bishops, of whom not above eighty were Arians. Their resolutions were firm and peremptory. They repudiated the Arian doctrines; they expressed their rigid adherence to the formulary of Nice. Ten bishops, however, of each party, were deputed to communicate their decrees to Constantius. The ten Arians were received with the utmost respect, their rivals with every kind of slight and neglect. Insensibly they were admitted to more intimate inter-

course; the flatteries, perhaps the bribes, of the Emperor prevailed; they returned, having signed a formulary directly opposed to their instructions. Their reception at first was unpromising; but by degrees the council, from which its firmest and most resolute members had gradually departed, and in which many poor and aged bishops still retained their seat, wearied, perplexed, worn out by the expense and discomfort of a long residence in a foreign city, consented to sign a creed in which the contested word, the *homousion*, was carefully suppressed (1). Arianism was thus deliberately adopted by a council, of which the authority was undisputed. The world, says Jerome, groaned to find itself Arian. But, on their return to their dioceses, the indignant prelates every where protested against the fraud and violence which had been practised against them. New persecutions followed: Gaudentius, Bishop of Rimini, lost his life.

The triumph of Arianism was far easier among the hundred and sixty bishops assembled at Seleucia. But it was more fatal to their cause: the Arians, and Semi-Arians, and Anomeans, mingled in tumultuous strife, and hurled mutual anathemas against each other. The new council met at Constantinople. By some strange political or religious vicissitude, the party of the Anomeans triumphed, while Aetius, its author, was sent into banishment. (2). Macedonius was deposed; Eudoxus of Antioch was translated to the imperial see; and the solemn dedication of the church of St. Sophia was celebrated by a prelate who denied the similitude of nature between the Father and the Son. The whole Christian world was in confusion; these fatal feuds penetrated almost as far as the Gospel itself had reached. The Emperor, whose alternately partial vehemence and subtlety had inflamed rather than allayed the tumult, found his authority set at nought; a deep, stern, and ineradicable resistance opposed the imperial decrees. A large portion of the empire proclaimed aloud that there were limits to the imperial despotism; that there was a higher allegiance, which superseded that due to the civil authority; that in affairs of religion they would not submit to the appointment of superiors who did not profess their views of Christian orthodoxy (3). The Emperor himself, by mingling with almost fanatical passion and zeal in these controversies, at once

(1) It is curious enough, that the Latin language did not furnish terms to express this fine distinction. Some Western prelates, many of whom probably did not understand a word of Greek, proposed, "*jam usque et homousii nomina recedant quæ in divinis Scripturis de Deo, et Dei Filio, non inveniuntur scripta.*" Apud Hilari-um, *Oper. Hist. Fragm. ix.*

(2) Aetius and Eunomius seem to have been the heroes of the historian Philostorgius, fragments of whose history have been preserved by the pious hostility of Photius. This diminishes our regret for the loss of the original work,

which would be less curious than a genuine Arian history. Philostorgius seems to object to the anti-materialist view of the Deity maintained by the Semi-Arian Eusebius, and, according to him, by Arius himself. He reproaches Eusebius with asserting the Deity to be incomprehensible and inconceivable: ἀγνωστος καὶ ἀκατάληπτος. *Lib. i. 2, 3.*

(3) Hilary quotes the sentence of St. Paul. *Ubi fides est, ibi et libertas est*; in allusion to the Emperor's assuming the cognisance over religious questions. *Oper. Hist. Fragm. i. c. 5.*



lowered himself to the level of his subjects, and justified the importance which they attached to these questions. If Constantius had firmly, calmly, and consistently, enforced mutual toleration, — if he had set the example of Christian moderation and temper; if he had set his face solely against the stern refusal of Athanasius and his party to admit the Arians into communion, — he might, perhaps, have retained some influence over the contending parties. But he was not content without enforcing the dominance of the Arian party; he dignified Athanasius with the hatred of a personal enemy, almost of a rival; and his subjects, by his own apparent admission that these were questions of spiritual life and death, were compelled to postpone his decrees to those of God; to obey their bishops, who held the keys of heaven and hell, rather than Cæsar, who could only afflict them with civil disabilities, or penalties in this life.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### JULIAN.

AMIDST all this intestine strife within the pale of Christianity, and this conflict between the civil and religious authorities, concerning their respective limits, Paganism made a desperate effort to regain its lost supremacy. Julian has, perhaps, been somewhat unfairly branded with the ill-sounding name of Apostate. His Christianity was but the compulsory obedience of youth to the distasteful lessons of education, enforced by the hateful authority of a tyrannical relative. As early as the maturity of his reason, — at least as soon as he dared to reveal his secret sentiments, — he avowed his preference for the ancient Paganism.

The most astonishing part of Julian's history is the development and partial fulfilment of all his vast designs during a reign of less than two years. His own age wondered at the rapidity with which the young Emperor accomplished his military, civil, and religious schemes (1). During his separate and subordinate command as Cæsar, his time was fully occupied with his splendid campaigns upon the Rhine (2). Julian was the vindicator of the old majesty of the empire; he threw back with a bold and successful effort the inroad of barbarism, which already threatened to overwhelm the Roman civilisation of Gaul. During the two unfinished years of his

(1) *Dicit aliquis: quomodo tam multa tam brevi tempore. Et rectè. Sed Imperator noster addit ad tempus quod otio suo detrahit.*\*\*\*Itaque grædævum jam imperium videbitur his, qui non ratione dierum et mensium, sed operum

multitudine et effectarum rerum modo Juliani tempora metientur. Mamertini *Grat. Actio. c. xiv.*

(2) Six years, from 355 to 361.

sole government, Julian had reunited the whole Roman empire under his single sceptre; he had reformed the army, the court, the tribunals of justice; he had promulgated many useful laws which maintained their place in the jurisprudence of the empire; he had established peace on all the frontiers; he had organised a large and well-disciplined force to chastise the Persians for their aggressions on the eastern border, and by a formidable diversion within their own territories, to secure the Euphratic provinces against the most dangerous rival of the Roman power. During all these engrossing cares of empire, he devoted himself with the zeal and activity of a mere philosopher and man of letters to those more tranquil pursuits. The conqueror of the Franks and the antagonist of Sapor delivered lectures in the schools, and published works, which, whatever may be thought of their depth and truth, display no mean powers of composition: as a writer, Julian will compete with most of his age. Besides all this, his vast and restless spirit contemplated, and had already commenced, nothing less than a total change in the religion of the empire; not merely the restoration of Paganism to the legal supremacy which it possessed before the reign of Constantine, and the degradation of Christianity into a private sect; but the actual extirpation of the new religion from the minds of men by the reviving energies of a philosophic, and at the same time profoundly religious, Paganism.

Short  
reign of  
Julian.  
A. D. 361.  
363.

The genius of ancient Rome and of ancient Greece might appear to revive in amicable union in the soul of Julian. The unmeasured military ambition, which turned the defensive into a war of aggression on all the imperilled frontiers; the broad and vigorous legislation; the unity of administration; the severer tone of manners, which belonged to the better days of Rome; the fine cultivation; the perspicuous philosophy; the lofty conceptions of moral greatness and purity, which distinguished the old Athenian. If the former (the Roman military enterprise), met eventually with the fate of Crassus or of Varus, rather than the glorious successes of Germanicus or Trajan, the times were more in fault than the general: if the latter (the Grecian elevation and elegance of mind) more resembled at times the affectation of the Sophist, and the coarseness of the Cynic, than the lofty views and exquisite harmony of Plato, or the practical wisdom of Socrates, the effete and exhausted state of Grecian letters and philosophy must likewise be taken into the account.

Character  
of Julian.

In the uncompleted two years of his sole empire (1), Julian had advanced so far in the restoration of the internal vigour and unity of administration, that it is doubtful how much further, but for the fatal Persian campaign, he might have fulfilled the visions of his

(1) One year, eight months, and twenty-three days. La Bleterie, Vie de Julien, p. 494.

noble ambition. He might have averted, at least for a time, the terrible calamities which burst upon the Roman world during the reign of Valentinian and Valens. But difficult and desperate as the enterprise might appear, the re-organisation of a decaying empire was less impracticable than the restoration of an extinguishing religion. A religion may awaken from indifference, and resume its dominion over the minds of men ; but not, if supplanted by a new form of faith, which has identified itself with the opinions and sentiments of the general mind. It can never dethrone a successful invader, who has been recognised as a lawful sovereign. And Christianity (could the clear and sagacious mind of Julian be blind to this essential difference?) had occupied the whole soul of man with a fulness and confidence which belonged, and could belong, to no former religion. It had intimately blended together the highest truths of philosophy with the purest morality ; the loftiest speculation with the most practical spirit. The vague theory of another life, timidly and dimly announced by the later Paganism, could ill compete with the deep and intense conviction, now rooted in the hearts of a large part of mankind by Christianity ; the source in some of harrowing fears, in others of the noblest hopes.

Religion  
of Julian.

Julian united in his own mind, and attempted to work into his new religion, the two incongruous characters of a zealot for the older superstitions, and for the more modern philosophy of Greece. He had fused together, in that which appeared to him an harmonious system, Homer and Plato. He thought that the whole ritual of sacrifice would combine with that allegoric interpretation of the ancient mythology, which undeified the greater part of the Heathen Pantheon. All that Paganism had borrowed from Christianity, it had rendered comparatively cold and powerless. The one Supreme Deity was a name and an abstract conception, a metaphysical being. The visible representative of the Deity, the Sun, which was in general an essential part of the new system, was, after all, foreign and Oriental ; it belonged to the genuine mythology neither of Greece nor Rome. The Theurgy, or awful and sublime communion of the mind with the spiritual world, was either too fine and fanciful for the vulgar belief, or associated, in the dim confusion of the popular conception, with that magic, against which the laws of Rome had protested with such stern solemnity ; and which, therefore, however eagerly pursued, and revered with involuntary awe, was always associated with impressions of its unlawfulness and guilt. Christianity, on the other hand, had completely incorporated with itself all that it had admitted from Paganism, or which, if we may so speak, constituted the Pagan part of Christianity. The Heathen Theurgy, even in its purest form, its dreamy intercourse with the intermediate race of dæmons, was poor and ineffective, compared with the diabolic and angelic agency, which became more and more mingled



up with Christianity. Where these subordinate dæmons were considered by the more philosophic Pagan to have been the older deities of the popular faith, it was rather a degradation of the ancient worship; where this was not the case, this fine perception of the spiritual world was the secret of the initiate few, rather than the all-pervading superstition of the many. The Christian dæmonology, on the other hand, which began to be heightened and multiplied by the fantastic imagination of the monks, brooding in their solitudes, seemed at least to grow naturally out of the religious system. The gradual darkening into superstition was altogether imperceptible, and harmonised entirely with the general feelings of the time. Christianity was a living plant, which imparted its vitality to the foreign suckers grafted upon it; the dead and sapless trunk of Paganism withered even the living boughs which were blended with it, by its own inevitable decay.

On the other hand, Christianity at no period could appear in a less amiable and attractive light to a mind preindisposed to its reception. It was in a state of universal fierce and implacable discord: the chief cities of the empire had run with blood shed in religious quarrels. The sole object of the conflicting parties seemed to be to confine to themselves the temporal and spiritual blessings of the faith; to exclude as many as they might from that eternal life, and to anathematise to that eternal death, which were revealed by the Gospel, and placed, according to the general belief, under the special authority of the clergy. Society seemed to be split up into irreconcilable parties; to the animosities of Pagan and Christian, were now added those of Christian and Christian. Christianity had passed through its earlier period of noble moral enthusiasm; of the energy with which it addressed its first proclamation of its doctrines to man; of the dignity with which it stood aloof from the intrigues and vices of the world; and of its admirable constancy under persecution. It had not fully attained its second state as a religion generally established in the minds of men, by a dominant hierarchy of unquestioned authority. Its great truths had no longer the striking charm of novelty; nor were they yet universally and profoundly implanted in the general mind by hereditary transmission, or early education, and ratified by the unquestioning sanction of ages.

The early education of Julian had been, it might almost appear, studiously and skilfully conducted, so as to show the brighter side of Paganism, the darker of Christianity. His infant years had been clouded by the murder of his father. How far his mind might retain any impression of this awful event, or remembrance of the place of his refuge, the Christian church, or the saviour of his life, the virtuous Bishop of Arethusa, it is of course impossible to conjecture. But his first instructor was a man who, born a Scythian,

Unfavourable state of Christianity.

Education  
of Julian.

and educated in Greece (1), united the severe morality of his ruder ancestors with the elegance of Grecian accomplishments. He enforced upon his young pupil the strictest modesty, contempt for the licentious or frivolous pleasures of youth, the theatre and the bath. At the same time, while he delighted his mind with the poetry of Homer, his graver studies were the Greek and Latin languages, the elements of the philosophy of Greece, and music, that original and attractive element of Grecian education (2). At the age of about fourteen or fifteen, Julian was shut up, with his brother Gallus, in Macellæ, a fortress in Asia Minor and committed in this sort of honourable prison to the rigid superintendence of ecclesiastics. By his Christian instructors, the young and ardent Julian was bound down to a course of the strictest observances; the midnight vigil, the fast, the long and weary prayer, and visits to the tombs of martyrs, rather than a wise and rational initiation in the genuine principles of the Gospel, or a judicious familiarity with the originality, the beauty, and the depth of the Christian morals and Christian religion. He was taught the virtue of implicit submission to his ecclesiastical superiors; the munificence of conferring gifts upon the churches; with his brother Gallus he was permitted, or rather incited, to build a chapel over the tomb of St. Mammas (3). For six years, he bitterly asserts, that he was deprived of every kind of useful instruction (4). Julian and his brother, it is even said, were ordained readers, and officiated in public in that character. But the passages of the sacred writings, with which he might thus have become acquainted, were imposed as lessons; and in the mind of Julian, Christianity, thus taught and enforced, was inseparably connected with the irksome and distasteful feelings of confinement and degradation. No youths of his own rank, or of ingenuous birth were permitted to visit his prison; he was reduced, as he indignantly declares, to the debasing society of slaves.

At the age of twenty, Julian was permitted to reside in Constantinople, afterwards at Nicomedia. The jealousy of Constantius was excited by the popular demeanour, sober manners, and the reputation for talents, which directed all eyes towards his youthful nephew. He dismissed him to the more dangerous and fatal residence in Nicomedia, in the neighbourhood of the most celebrated and most attractive of the Pagan party. The most faithful adherents

(1) His name was Mardonius, Julian. ad Athen. et Misopogon, Socrat. E. H. iii. 1. Amm. Marc. xxii. 12.

(2) See the high character of this man in the Misopogon, p. 351.

(3) Julian is said even thus early to have betrayed his secret inclinations; in his declamations he took delight in defending the cause of Paganism against Christianity. A prophetic miracle foreboded his future course. While this

church rose expeditiously under the labour of Gallus, the obstinate stones would not obey that of Julian; an invisible hand disturbed the foundations, and threw down all his work. Gregory Nazianzen declares that he had heard this from eye-witnesses; Sozomen, from those who had heard it from eye-witnesses. Gregor. Or. iii. p. 59. 61. Sozomen, v. 2.

(4) Πάντος μαθήματος σπουδαίου.

of Paganism were that class with which the tastes and inclinations of Julian brought him into close intimacy; the sophists, the men of letters, the rhetoricians, the poets, the philosophers. He was forbidden, indeed, perhaps by the jealousy of his appointed instructor Ecebolus, who at this time conformed to the religion of the court, to hear the dangerous lectures of Libanius, equally celebrated for his eloquence and his ardent attachment to the old religion. But Julian obtained his writings, which he devoured with all the delight of a stolen enjoyment (1). He formed an intimate acquaintance with the heads of the philosophic school, with *Ædesius*, his pupils *Eusebius* and *Chrysanthius*, and at last with the famous *Maximus*. These men are accused of practising the most subtle and insidious arts upon the character of their ardent and youthful votary. His grave and meditative mind imbibed with eager delight the solemn mysticism of their tenets, which were impressed more deeply by significant and awful ceremonies. A magician at *Nicomedia* first excited his curiosity, and tempted him to enter on these exciting courses. At *Pergamus* he visited the aged *Ædesius*; and the manner in which these philosophers passed Julian onward from one to another, as if through successive stages of initiation in their mysterious doctrines, bears the appearance of a deliberate scheme to work him up to their purposes. The aged *Ædesius* addressed him as the favoured child of wisdom; declined the important charge of his instruction, but commended him to his pupils, *Eusebius* and *Chrysanthius*, who could unlock the inexhaustible source of light and wisdom. "If you should attain the supreme felicity of being initiated in their mysteries, you will blush to have been born a man, you will no longer endure the name." The pupils of *Ædesius* fed the greedy mind of the proselyte with all their stores of wisdom, and then skilfully unfolded the greater fame of *Maximus*. *Eusebius* professed to despise the vulgar arts of wonder-working, at least in comparison with the purification of the soul; but he described the power of *Maximus* in terms to which Julian could not listen without awe and wonder. *Maximus* had led them into the temple of *Hecate*; he had burned a few grains of incense, he had murmured a hymn, and the statue of the goddess was seen to smile. They were awe-struck, but *Maximus* declared that this was nothing. The lamps throughout the temple shall immediately burst into light: as he spoke, they kindled and blazed up. "But of these mystical wonder-workers, we think lightly," proceeded the skilful speaker, "do thou, like us, think only of the internal purification of the reason." "Keep to your book," broke out the impatient youth, "this is the man I seek (2)." He hastened to *Ephesus*. The person and demeanour

Inter-  
course  
with the  
philoso-  
phers.

(1) Liban. Orat. Par. t. i. p. 526.

(2) Eunapius, in Vit. *Ædesii* et *Maximi*.



of Maximus were well suited to keep up the illusion. He was a venerable man, with a long white beard, with keen eyes, great activity, soft and persuasive voice, rapid and fluent eloquence. By Maximus, who summoned Chrysanthius to him, Julian was brought into direct communion with the invisible world. The faithful and officious Genii from this time watched over Julian in peace and war; they conversed with him in his slumbers, they warned him of dangers, they conducted his military operations. Thus far we proceed on the authority of Pagan writers; the scene of his solemn initiation rests on the more doubtful testimony of Christian historians (1), which, as they were little likely to be admitted into the secrets of these dark and hidden rites, is to be received with grave suspicion, more especially as they do not scruple to embellish them with Christian miracle. Julian was led first into a temple, then into a subterranean crypt, in almost total darkness. The evocations were made; wild and terrible sounds were heard; spectres of fire gibbered around. Julian, in his sudden terror, made the sign of the cross. All disappeared, all was silent. Twice this took place, and Julian could not but express to Maximus his astonishment at the power of this sign. "The gods," returned the dexterous philosopher, "will have no communion with so profane a worshipper." From this time, it is said, on better authority (2), that Julian burst, like a lion in his wrath, the slender ties which bound him to Christianity. But he was still constrained to dissemble his secret apostasy. His enemies declared that he redoubled his outward zeal for Christianity, and even shaved his head in conformity with the monastic practice. His brother Gallus had some suspicion of his secret views, and sent the Arian bishop of Aetius to confirm him in the faith.

Conduct  
of Con-  
stantius to  
Julian.

How far Julian, in this time of danger, stooped to disguise his real sentiments, it were rash to decide. But it would by no means commend Christianity to the respect and attachment of Julian, that it was the religion of his imperial relative. Popular rumour did not acquit Constantius of the murder of Julian's father; and Julian himself afterwards publicly avowed his belief in this crime (3). He had probably owed his own escape to his infant age and the activity of his friends. Up to this time, his life had been the precarious and permissive boon of a jealous tyrant, who had inflicted on him every kind of degrading restraint. His place of education had been a prison, and his subsequent liberty watched with suspicious vigilance. The personal religion of Constantius; his embarking with alternate violence and subtlety in theological disputations; his vacillation between timid submission to priestly authority and angry persecution, were not likely to make a favourable impression on a wavering mind. The Pagans themselves, if we may take the best

(1) Greg. Naz. Orat. iii. 71. Theodoret, iii. 3.

(2) Libanius.

(3) *Ad Senatam Populumque Atheniensem.* Julian, Oper. p. 270.

historian of the time as the representative of their opinions (1), considered that Constantius dishonoured the Christian religion by mingling up its perspicuous simplicity with anile superstition. If there was little genuine Christianity in the theological discussions of Constantius, there had been less of its beautiful practical spirit in his conduct to Julian. It had allayed no jealousy, mitigated no hatred; it had not restrained his temper from overbearing tyranny, nor kept his hands clean from blood. And now, the death of his brother Gallus, to whom he seems to have cherished warm attachment, was a new evidence of the capricious and unhumanised tyranny of Constantius, a fearful omen of the uncertainty of his own life under such a despotism. He had beheld the advancement and the fate of his brother; and his future destiny presented the alternative either of ignominious obscurity or fatal distinction. His life was spared only through the casual interference of the humane and enlightened Empress; and her influence gained but a slow and difficult triumph over the malignant eunuchs, who ruled the mind of Constantius. But he had been exposed to the ignominy of arrest and imprisonment, and a fearful suspense of seven weary months (2). His motions, his words, were watched; his very heart scrutinised; he was obliged to suppress the natural emotions of grief for the death of his brother; to impose silence on his fluent eloquence; and act the hypocrite to nature as well as to religion. His retreat was Athens, of all cities in the empire that, probably, in which Paganism still maintained the highest ascendancy, and appeared in the most attractive form. The political religion of Rome had its stronghold in the capital; that of Greece, in the centre of intellectual culture and of the fine arts. Athens might still be considered the university of the empire; from all quarters, particularly of the East, young men of talent and promise crowded to complete their studies in those arts of grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, which, however, by no means disdained by the Christians, might still be considered as more strictly attached to the Pagan interest.

Julian at  
Athens.

Among the Christian students who at this time paid the homage of their residence to this great centre of intellectual culture, were Basil and Gregory of Nazianzum. The latter, in the orations with which in later times he condemned the memory of Julian, has drawn, with a coarse and unfriendly hand, the picture of his person and manners. His manners did injustice to the natural beauties of his person, and betrayed his restless, inquisitive, and somewhat incoherent, character. The Christian (we must remember, indeed, that these predictions were published subsequent to their fulfilment, and that, by their own account, Julian had already betrayed, in Asia Minor, his secret propensities) already discerned in the unquiet

(1) Ammianus Marcellinus.

(2) *Ἐμέθ' ἐ ἀρχῆς μόγις, ἐπταμηνῶν*

*ὅλων ἐλκύσας τῆδε κακείσε.* Ad. S. P. Atb. p. 272.

and unsubmissive spirit, the future apostate. But the general impression which Julian made was far more favourable. His quickness, his accomplishments, the variety and extent of his information; his gentleness, his eloquence, and even his modesty, gained universal admiration, and strengthened the interest excited by his forlorn and perilous position.

Julian initiated at Eleusis.

Of all existing Pagan rites, those which still maintained the greatest respect, and would impress a mind like Julian's with the profoundest veneration, were the Eleusinian mysteries. They united the sanctity of almost immemorial age with some similitude to the Platonic Paganism of the day, at least sufficient for the ardent votaries of the latter to claim their alliance. The Hierophant of Eleusis was admitted to be the most potent theurgist in the world (1). Julian honoured him, or was honoured by his intimacy; and the initiation in the Mystery of those, emphatically called the Goddesses, with all its appalling dramatic machinery, and its high speculative and imaginative doctrines, the impenetrable, the ineffable tenets of the sanctuary, consummated the work of Julian's conversion.

Elevation of Julian to the rank of Cæsar.

The elevation of Julian to the rank of Cæsar was at length extorted from the necessities, rather than freely bestowed by the love, of the Emperor. Nor did the jealous hostility of Constantius cease with this apparent reconciliation. Constantius, with cold suspicion, thwarted all his measures, crippled his resources, and appropriated to himself, with unblushing injustice, the fame of his victories (2). Julian's assumption of the purple, whether forced upon him by the ungovernable attachment of his soldiery, or prepared by his own subtle ambition, was justified, and perhaps compelled, by the base ingratitude of Constantius; and by his manifest, if not avowed, resolution of preparing the ruin of Julian, by removing his best troops to the East (3).

Death of Constantius.

The timely death of Constantius alone prevented the deadly warfare in which the last of the race of Constantine were about to contest the empire. The dying bequest of that empire to Julian, said to have been made by the penitent Constantius, could not efface the recollection of those long years of degradation, of jealousy, of avowed or secret hostility; still less could it allay the dislike or contempt of Julian for his weak and insolent predecessor, who, governed by eunuchs, wasted the precious time which

(1) Compare (in Eunap. Vit. *Ædes*. p. 52., edit. Boissonade) the prophecy of the dissolution of Paganism ascribed to this pontiff; a prediction which may do credit to the sagacity, or evince the apprehensions of the seer, but will by no means claim the honour of divine foreknowledge.

(2) Ammianus, l. xv. 8. et seqq. Socrates, iii. 1. Sozomen, v. n. La Bleterie, Vie de Julien, 89. et seqq. The campaigns of Julian, in La Bleterie, lib. ii. Gibbon, iv. pp. 4. 4.

The well-known passage in Ammianus shows the real sentiments of the court towards Julian. In odium venit cum victoriis suis capella non homo; ut hirsutum Julianum carpentem appellantesque loquacem talpam, et purpuratam simiam, et litterionem Græcam. Amm. Marc. xvii. 11.

(3) Amm. Marc. xx. etc. Zosimus, iii. Liban. Or. x. Jul. ad S. P. Q. A.



ought to have been devoted to the cares of the empire, in idle theological discussions, or quarrels with contending ecclesiastics. The part in the character of the deceased Emperor least likely to find favour in the sight of his successor Julian was his religion. The unchristian Christianity of Constantius must bear some part of the guilt of Julian's apostasy.

Up to the time of his revolt against Constantius, Julian had respected the dominant Christianity. The religious acts of his early youth, performed in obedience, or under the influence of his instructors; or his submissive conformity, when his watchful enemies were eager for his life, ought hardly to convict him of deliberate hypocrisy. In Gaul, still under the strictest suspicion, and engaged in almost incessant warfare, he would have few opportunities to betray his secret sentiments. But Jupiter was consulted in his private chamber, and sanctioned his assumption of the imperial purple (1). And no sooner had he marched into Illyria, an independent Emperor, at the head of his own army, than he threw aside all concealment, and proclaimed himself a worshipper of the ancient gods of Paganism. The auspices were taken, and the act of divination was not the less held in honour, because the fortunate soothsayer announced the death of Constantius. The army followed the example of their victorious general. At his command, the neglected temples resumed their ceremonies; he adorned them with offerings; he set the example of costly sacrifices (2). The Athenians in particular obeyed with alacrity the commands of the new Emperor; the honours of the priesthood became again a worthy object of contest; two distinguished females claimed the honour of representing the genuine Eumolpidæ, and of officiating in the Parthenon. Julian, already anxious to infuse as much of the real Christian spirit, as he could, into reviving Paganism, exhorted the contending parties to peace and unity, as the most acceptable sacrifice to the gods.

The death of Constantius left the whole Roman world open to the civil and religious schemes which lay, floating and unformed, before the imagination of Julian. The civil reforms were executed with necessary severity; but in some instances, with more than necessary cruelty. The elevation of Paganism into a rational and effective faith, and the depression, and even the eventual extinction of Christianity, were the manifest objects of Julian's religious policy. Julian's religion was the eclectic Paganism of the new Platonic philosophy. The chief speculative tenet was Oriental rather than Greek or Roman. The one immaterial inconceivable Father dwelt

Conduct  
of Julian.

(1) Amm. xxi. 1.

(2) The Western army was more easily practised upon than the Eastern soldiers at a subsequent period. *Θρησκευόμενοι τοὺς Θεοὺς*

*ἀναφανδὸν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ συγκατέληγοντος μοι στρατοπέδου θεοσεβῆς ἐστίν.* Epist. xxxviii.

alone; though his majesty was held in reverence, the direct and material object of worship was the great Sun (1), the living and animated, and propitious and beneficent image of the immaterial Father (2). Below this primal Deity and his glorious image, there was room for the whole Pantheon of subordinate deities, of whom, in like manner, the stars were the material representatives; but who possessed invisible powers, and manifested themselves in various ways, in dreams and visions, through prodigies and oracles, the flights of birds, and the signs in the sacrificial victims (3). This vague and comprehensive Paganism might conclude under its dominion all classes and nations which adhered to the Heathen worship; the Oriental, the Greek, the Roman, even, perhaps, the Northern barbarian, would not refuse to admit the simplicity of the primal article of the creed, spreading out as it did below into the boundless latitude of Polytheism. The immortality of the soul appears to follow as an inference from some of Julian's Platonic doctrines (4); but it is remarkable how rarely it is put forward as an important point of difference in his religious writings, while, in his private correspondence, he falls back to the dubious and hesitating language of the ancient Heathens: "I am not one of those who disbelieve the immortality of the soul; but the gods alone can know; man can only conjecture that secret (5):" but his best consolation on the loss of friends was the saying of the Grecian philosopher to Darius, that if he would find three persons who had not suffered the like calamities, he would restore his beautiful wife to life (6). His dying language, however, though still vague, and allied to the old Pantheistic system, sounds more like serene confidence in some future state of being.

Restoration of Paganism.

The first care of Julian was to restore the outward form of Paganism to its former splendour, and to infuse the vigour of reviving youth into the antiquated system. The temples were every where to be restored to their ancient magnificence; the municipalities were charged with the expense of these costly renovations. Where they had been destroyed by the zeal of the Christians, large fines were levied on the communities, and became, as will hereafter appear, a pretext for grinding exaction, and sometimes cruel persecution. It assessed on the whole community the penalty, merited,

(1) Τὸν μέγαν Ἥλιον, τὸ ζῶν ἄγαλμα καὶ ἐμφύχον, καὶ εὖνουν καὶ ἀγαθοερ. γόν, τοῦ νοήτου πατρός.

(2) Compare Julian. apud Cyril, lib. ii. p. 65.

(3) Julian asserts the various offices of the subordinate deities, apud Cyril., lib. vii. p. 235.

One of the most remarkable illustrations of this wide-spread worship of the sun is to be found in the address of Julius Firmicus Maternus to the Emperors Constantius and Constans. He introduces the sun as remonstrating against the dishonourable honours thus heaped upon him, and protests against being responsible for the acts, or involved in the fate, of Liber, Attys,

or Osiris. Nolo ut errori vestro nomen meum fomenta suppeditet.\* Quicquid sum simpliciter Deo pareo, nec aliud volo de me intelligatis, nisi quod videtis. c. 8.

(4) Lib. ii. 58.

(5) Οὐ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν τῶν πεπεισμένων τὰς ψυχὰς ἥτοι προαπώλυσθαι τῶν σαμμάτων ἢ συναπύλλυσθαι, \*\* Ὡς τοῖς μὲν ἀνθρώποις ἀρμόζει περὶ τοιοῦτων εἰκάζειν, ἐπίστασθαι δὲ αὐτὰ τοὺς θεοὺς ἀνάγκη. Epist. lxiii. p. 452.

(6) Epistle to Amerius on the loss of his wife. Ep. xxxvii. p. 412.

perhaps, only by the rashness of a few zealots; it revived outrages almost forgotten, and injuries perpetrated, perhaps, with the sanction, unquestionably with the connivance, of the former government. In many instances, it may have revenged on the innocent and peaceful, the crimes of the avaricious and irreligious, who either plundered under the mask of Christian zeal, or seized the opportunity, when the zeal of others might secure their impunity. That which takes place in all religious revolutions, had occurred to a considerable extent: the powerful had seized the opportunity of plundering the weaker party for their own advantage. The eunuchs and favourites of the court had fattened on the spoil of the temples (1). If these men had been forced to regorge their ill-gotten gains, justice might have approved the measure, but their crimes were unfairly visited on the whole Christian body. The extent to which the ruin and spoliation of the temples had been carried in the East, may be estimated from the tragic lamentations of Libanius. The soul of Julian, according to the orator, burned for empire, in order to restore the ancient order of things.

In some respects, the success of Julian answered the high-wrought expectations of his partisans. His panegyrist indulges in this lofty language. "Thou, then, I say, O mightiest Emperor, hast restored to the republic the expelled and banished virtues; thou hast rekindled the study of letters; thou hast not only delivered from her trial Philosophy, suspected heretofore and deprived of her honours, and even arraigned as a criminal, but hast clothed her in purple, crowned her with jewels, and seated her on the imperial throne. We may now look on the heavens, and contemplate the stars with fearless gaze, who, a short time ago, like the beasts of the field, fixed our downward and grovelling vision on the earth (2)." "First of all," says Libanius, "he re-established the exiled religion, building, restoring, embellishing the temples. Everywhere were altars and fires, and the blood and fat of sacrifice. and smoke, and sacred rites, and diviners, fearlessly performing their functions. And on the tops of mountains were pipings and processions, and the sacrificial ox, which was at once an offering to the gods and a banquet to men (3)." The private temple in the palace of Julian, in which he worshipped daily, was sacred to the Sun; but he founded altars to all the gods. He looked with especial favour on those cities which had retained their temples, with abhorrence on those which had suffered them to be destroyed, or to fall to ruin (4).

(1) *Pasti templorum spoliis*, is the strong expression of Ammianus. Libanius says, that some persons had built themselves houses from the materials of the temples. *Χεῖματα δὲ ἐπέλαυν οἱ τοῖς τῶν ἱερῶν λίθοις σφίσιν αὐτοῖς οἰκίας ἐγείροντες*. Orat. Parent. p. 504.

(2) *Mam. Grat. Act. c. xxiii*. This clause refers, no doubt, to astrology and divination.

(3) See v. 1. p. 529. one among many passages; likewise, the *Oratio pro Templis*, and the *Monodia*.

(4) *Orat. Parent. p. 564*.



Julian so entirely misapprehended Christianity, as to attribute its success and influence to its internal organisation, rather than to its internal authority over the soul of man. He thought that the religion grew out of the sacerdotal power, not that the sacerdotal power was but the vigorous development of the religion. He fondly supposed that the imperial edict, and the authority of the government, could supply the place of profound religious sentiment, and transform the whole Pagan priesthood, whether attached to the dissolute worship of the East, the elegant ceremonial of Greece, or the graver ritual of Rome, into a serious, highly moral, and blameless hierarchy. The Emperor was to be at once the supreme head, and the model of this new sacerdotal order. The sagacious mind of Julian might have perceived the dangerous power, growing up in the Christian episcopate, which had already encroached upon the imperial authority, and began to divide the allegiance of the world. His political apprehensions may have concurred with his religious animosities, in not merely endeavouring to check the increase of this power, but in desiring to concentrate again in the imperial person both branches of authority. The supreme pontificate of Paganism had indeed passed quietly down with the rest of the imperial titles and functions. But the interference of the Christian emperors in ecclesiastical affairs had been met with resistance, obeyed only with sullen reluctance, or but in deference to the strong arm of power. The doubtful issue of the conflict between the Emperor and his religious antagonist might awaken reasonable alarm for the majesty of the empire. If, on the other hand, Julian should succeed in reorganising the Pagan priesthood in efficiency, respect, and that moral superiority which now belonged to the Christian ecclesiastical system, the supreme pontificate, instead of being a mere appellation, or an appendage to the imperial title, would be an office of unlimited influence and authority (1). The Emperor would be the undisputed and unrivalled head of the religion of the empire; the whole sacerdotal order would be at his command; Paganism, instead of being, as heretofore, a confederacy of different religions, an aggregate of local systems of worship, each under its own tutelary deity, would become a well-regulated monarchy, with its provincial, civic, and village priesthoods, acknowledging the supremacy, and obeying the impulse, of the high imperial functionary. Julian admitted the distinction between the priest and the laity (2). In every province a supreme pontiff was to be appointed, charged with a superinten-

Julian's  
new priest-  
hood.

(1) See the curious fragment of the sixty-second epistle, p. 450, in which Julian asserts his supremacy not merely as Pontifex Maximus, but as holding a high rank among the worshippers of Cybele. Ἐγὼ τοίγον ἐπειδὴ πέρειμι κατὰ μὲν τὰ πάτρια μὲν ἄς Ἀρχιερεύς,

ἐλαχον δὲ νῦν καὶ τοῦ Διδυμαίου προσητεοῖν.

(2) Ἐπὶ σοὶ ποῦ ἔμετεςσιν ἐμπείριας (ὅλας) πᾶν δικαίων, ὅς οὐκ οἶσθα τί μὲν ἱερεὺς, τί δὲ ἰδιώτης. Frag. Epist. lxi.

dence over the conduct of the inferior priesthood, and armed with authority to suspend or to depose those who should be guilty of any indecent irregularity. The whole priesthood were to be sober, chaste, temperate in all things. They were to abstain, not merely from loose society, but, in a spirit diametrically opposite to the old religion, were rarely to be seen at public festivals, never where women mingled in them (1). In private houses, they were only to be present at the moderate banquets of the virtuous; they were never to be seen drinking in taverns, or exercising any base or sordid trade. The priesthood were to stand aloof from society, and only mingle with it to infuse their own grave decency, and unimpeachable moral tone. The theatre, that second temple, as it might be called, of the older religion, was sternly proscribed; so entirely was it considered sunk from its high religious character, so incapable of being restored to its old moral influence. They were to avoid all books, poetry, or tales, which might inflame their passions; to abstain altogether from those philosophical writings which subverted the foundations of religious belief, those of the Pyrrhonists and Epicureans, which Julian asserts had happily fallen into complete neglect, and had almost become obsolete. They were to be diligent and liberal in almsgiving, and to exercise hospitality on the most generous scale. The Jews had no beggars, the Christians maintained, indiscriminately, all applicants to their charity; it was a disgrace to the Pagans to be inattentive to such duties; and the authority of Homer is alleged to show the prodigal hospitality of the older Greeks. They were to establish houses of reception for strangers in every city, and thus to rival or surpass the generosity of the Christians. Supplies of corn from the public granaries were assigned for these purposes, and placed at the disposal of the priests, partly for the maintenance of their attendants, partly for these pious uses. They were to pay great regard to the burial of the dead, a subject on which Grecian feeling had always been peculiarly sensitive, particularly of strangers. The benevolent institutions of Christianity were to be imitated and associated to Paganism. A tax was to be levied in every province for the maintenance of the poor, and distributed by the priesthood. Hospitals for the sick and for indigent strangers of every creed were to be formed in convenient places. The Christians, not without justice, called the Emperor "the ape of Christianity." Of all homage to the Gospel, this was the most impressive and sincere; and we are astonished at the blindness of Julian in not perceiving that these changes, which thus enforced his admiration, were the genuine and permanent results of the religion; but the disputes, and strifes, and persecutions, the accidental and temporary effects of human pas-

His charitable institutions.

imitated from Christianity.

(1) See Epist. xlix.

sions, awakened by this new and violent impulse on the human mind.

**Ritual.** Something like an universal ritual formed part of the design of Julian. Three times a day prayer was to be publicly offered in the temples. The powerful aid of music, so essential a part of the older and better Grecian instruction, and of which the influence is so elevating to the soul (1), was called in to impress the minds of the worshippers. Each temple was to have its organised band of choristers. A regular system of alternate chanting was introduced. It would be curious, if it were possible, to ascertain whether the Grecian temples received back their own music and their alternately responding chorus from the Christian churches.

**Respect for temples.** Julian would invest the Pagan priesthood in that respect, or rather that commanding majesty, with which the profound reverence of the Christian world arrayed their hierarchy. Solemn silence was to reign in the temples. All persons in authority were to leave their guards at the door when they entered the hallowed precincts. The Emperor himself forbade the usual acclamations on his entrance into the presence of the gods. Directly he touched the sacred threshold, he became a private man.

**Religious instruction.** It is said that he meditated a complete course of religious instruction. Schoolmasters, catechists, preachers, were to teach,—are we to suppose the Platonic philosophy?—as a part of the religion. A penitential form was to be drawn up for the readmission of transgressors into the fold. Instead of throwing open the temples to the free and promiscuous reception of apostatising Christians, the value of the privilege was to be enhanced by the difficulty of attaining it (2). They were to be slowly admitted to the distinction of rational believers in the gods. The *dii averruncatores* (atoning deities) were to be propitiated; they were to pass through different degrees of initiation. Prayers, expiations, lustrations, severe trials, could alone purify their bodies and their minds, and make them worthy participants in the Pagan mysteries.

**Animal sacrifices.** But Julian was not content with this moral regeneration of Paganism; he attempted to bring back the public mind to all the sanguinary ritual of sacrifice, to which the general sentiment had been gradually growing unfamiliar and repugnant. The time was passed when men could consider the favour of the gods propitiated according to the number of slaughtered beasts. The philosophers must have smiled in secret over the superstition of the philosophic Emperor. Julian himself washed off his Christian baptism by the new Oriental rite of aspersion by blood, the *Taurobolia* or *Kriobolia* of the Mithriac mysteries (3); he was regenerated anew to Paganism (4). This indeed was a secret ceremony; but Julian was

(1) On Music. See Epist. lvi.

(2) See Epist. lii.

(3) Gregor. Naz. iii. p. 70.

(4) The person initiated descended into a pit



perpetually seen, himself wielding the sacrificial knife, and exploring with his own hands the reeking entrails of the victims, to learn the secrets of futurity. The enormous expenditure lavished on the sacrifices, the hecatombs of cattle, the choice birds from all quarters, drained the revenue (1). The Western soldiers, especially the intemperate Gauls, indulged in the feast of the victims to such excess, and mingled them with such copious libations of wine, as to be carried to their tents amid the groans and mockeries of the more sober (2). The gifts to diviners, soothsayers, and imposters of all classes, offended equally the more wise and rational. In the public, as well as private, conduct of Julian, there was a Heathen Pharisaism, an attention to minute and trifling observances, which could not but excite contempt even in the more enlightened of his own party. Every morning and evening he offered sacrifice to the sun; he rose at night to offer the same homage to the moon and stars. Every day brought the rite of some other god; he was constantly seen prostrate before the image of the deity, busying himself about the ceremony, performing the menial offices of cleansing the wood, and kindling the fire with his own breath, till the victim was ready for the imperial hands (3).

Instead of the Christian hierarchy, Julian hastened to environ himself with the most distinguished of the Heathen philosophers. Most of these, indeed, pretended to be a kind of priesthood. Intercessors between the deities and the world of man, they wrought miracles, foresaw future events; they possessed the art of purifying the soul, so that it should be reunited to the Primal Spirit: the Divinity dwelt within them.

Philosophers.

The obscurity of the names which Julian thus set up to rival in popular estimation an Athanasius or a Gregory of Nazianzum, is not altogether to be ascribed to the final success of Christianity. The impartial verdict of posterity can scarcely award to these men a higher appellation than that of sophists and rhetoricians. The subtlety and ingenuity of these more imaginative, perhaps, but far less profound, *schoolmen* of Paganism, were wasted on idle reveries, on solemn trifling, and questions which it was alike useless to agitate, and impossible to solve. The hand of death was alike upon the religion, the philosophy, the eloquence, of Greece; and the temporary movement which Julian excited was but a feeble quivering, a last impotent struggle, preparatory to total dissolution. Maximus appears, in his own time, to have been the most eminent

or trench, and through a kind of sieve, or stone pierced with holes, the blood of the bull or the ram was poured over his whole person.

(1) Julian acknowledges the reluctance to sacrifice in many parts. "Show me," he says, to the philosopher Aristomenes, "a genuine Greek in Cappadocia." Τίς γὰρ τοὺς μὲν οὐ βούλομένους, ὁλίγους δὲ τινὰς ἐθέλον-

τας μὲν, οὐκ εἰδότες δὲ θύειν, ὀρῶ. Epist. iv. p. 375.

(2) I do not believe the story of human sacrifices in Alexandria and Athens, Socrat. E. H. iii. 13.

(3) Innumeros sine parcimoniâ uactans; ut crederetur, si revertisset de Parthis, boves jam defecturos. Ann. Marc. xxv. 4.

of his class. The writings of Libanius and of Iamblichus alone survive, to any extent, the general wreck of the later Grecian literature. The genius and the language of Plato were alike wanting in his degenerate disciples. Julian himself is, perhaps, the best, because the plainest and most perspicuous, writer of his time : and the "Cæsars" may rank as no unsuccessful attempt at satiric irony.

**Maximus.** Maximus was the most famous of the school. He had been among the early instructors of Julian. The Emperor had scarcely assumed the throne, when he wrote to Maximus in the most urgent and flattering terms : life was not life without him (1). Maximus obeyed the summons. On his journey through Asia Minor, the cities vied with each other in doing honour to the champion of Paganism. When the Emperor heard of his arrival in Constantinople, though engaged in an important public ceremonial, he broke it off at once, and hastened to welcome his philosophic guest. The roads to the metropolis were crowded with sophists, hurrying to bask in the sunshine of imperial favour (2). The privilege of travelling at the public cost, by the posting establishment of the empire, so much abused by Constantius in favour of the bishops, was now conceded to some of the philosophers. Chrysanthius, another sophist of great reputation, was more modest and more prudent ; he declined the dazzling honour, and preferred the philosophic quiet of his native town. Julian appointed him, with his wife, to the high-priesthood of Lydia ; and Chrysanthius, with the prophetic discernment of worldly wisdom, kept on amicable terms with the Christians. Of Libanius, Julian writes in rapturous admiration. Iamblichus had united all that was excellent in the ancient philosophy and poetry ; Pindar, Democritus and Orpheus, were blended in his perfect and harmonious syncretism (3). The wisdom of Iamblichus so much dazzled and overawed the Emperor that he dared not intrude too much of his correspondence on the awful sage. "One of his letters surpassed in value all the gold of Lydia." The influence of men over their own age may in general be estimated by the language of contemporary writers. The admiration they excite is the test of their power, at least with their own party. The idolatry of the philosophers is confined to the few initiate ; and even with their own party, the philosophers disappointed the high expectations which they had excited of their dignified superiority to the baser interests and weaknesses of mankind. They were by no means proof against the intoxication of court favour ; they betrayed their vanity, their love of pleasure. Maximus himself is accused of as-

(1) Epist. xv. The nameless person to whom the first epistle is addressed is declared superior to Pythagoras or Plato. Epist. i. p. 372.

(2) The severe and grave Priscus despised the

youths who embraced philosophy as a fashion. Κορυζαντιάντων ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ μερκανίαν. Vit. Prisc. apud Eunap., ed. Boisson. p. 67.

(3) Epist. xv.

suming the pomp and insolence of a favourite ; the discarded eunuchs had been replaced, it was feared, by a new, not less intriguing or more disinterested, race of courtiers.

To the Christians, Julian assumed the language of the most liberal toleration. His favourite orator thus describes his policy. “ He thought that neither fire nor sword could change the faith of mankind ; the heart disowns the hand which is compelled by terror to sacrifice. Persecutions only make hypocrites, who are unbelievers throughout life, or martyrs, honoured after death (1). He strictly prohibited the putting to death the Galileans (his favourite appellation of the Christians), as worthy rather of compassion than of hatred (2). “ Leave them to punish themselves, poor, blind, and misguided beings, who abandon the most glorious privilege of mankind, the adoration of the immortal gods, to worship the mouldering remains and bones of the dead (3).” He did not perceive that it was now too late to reassume the old Roman contempt for the obscure and foreign religion. Christianity had sat on the throne ; and disdain now sounded like mortified pride. And the language, even the edicts, of the Emperor, under the smooth mask of gentleness and pity, betrayed the bitterness of hostility. His conduct was a perpetual sarcasm. It was the interest of Paganism to inflame, rather than to allay, the internal feuds of Christianity. Julian revoked the sentence of banishment pronounced against Arians, Apollinarians, and Donatists. He determined, it is said, to expose them to a sort of public exhibition of intellectual gladiatorship. He summoned the advocates of the several sects to dispute in his presence, and presided with mock solemnity over their debates. His own voice was drowned in the clamour, till at length, as though to contrast them, to their disadvantage, with the wild barbarian warriors with whom he had been engaged,—“ Hear me,” exclaimed the Emperor ; “ the Franks and the Alemanni have heard me.” “ No wild beasts,” he said, “ are so savage and intractable as Christian sectaries.” He even endured personal insult. The statue of the “ Fortune of Constantinople,” bearing a cross in its hand, had been set up by Constantine. Julian took away the cross, and removed the Deity into a splendid temple. While he was employed in sacrifice, he was interrupted by the remonstrances of Maris, the Arian bishop of Chalcedon, to whom age and blindness had added courage. “ Peace,” said the Emperor, “ blind old man, thy Galilean God will not restore thine eyesight.” “ I thank my God,” answered Maris, “ for my blindness, which spares me the pain of beholding an apostate like thee.” Julian calmly proceeded in his sacrifice (4).

Toleration  
of Julian.

His sar-  
castic  
tone.

(1) Liban. Orat. Parent. v. i. p. 562.

(2) He asserts, in his 7th epistle, that he is willing neither to put to death, nor to injure the Christians in any manner, but the worshippers

of the gods were on all occasions to be preferred — *προτιμᾶσθαι*. Compare Epist. lii.

(3) His usual phrase was, “ worshippers of the dead, and of the bones of men.”

(4) Socrates, iii. 12.



Taunts  
their pro-  
fessions of  
poverty

The sagacity of Julian perceived the advantage to be obtained by contrasting the wealth, the power, and the lofty tone of the existing priesthood with the humility of the primitive Christians. On the occasion of a dispute between the Arian and orthodox party in Edessa, he confiscated their wealth, in order, as he said, to reduce them to their becoming and boasted poverty. "Wealth, according to their admirable law," he ironically says, "prevents them from attaining the kingdom of heaven (1)."

Privileges  
with-  
drawn.

But his hostility was not confined to these indirect and invidious measures, or to quiet or insulting scorn. He began by abrogating all the exclusive privileges of the clergy; their immunity from taxation, and exemptions from public duties. He would not allow Christians to be præfects, as their law prohibited their adjudging capital punishments. He resumed all the grants made on the revenues of the municipalities, and the supplies of corn for their maintenance. It was an act of more unwarrantable yet politic tyranny

Exclusion  
from  
public  
education.

to exclude them altogether from the public education. By a familiarity with the great models of antiquity, the Christian had risen at least to the level of the most correct and elegant of the Heathen writers of the day. Though something of Oriental expression, from the continual adoption of language or of imagery from the Sacred Writings, adhered to their style, yet even that gives a kind of raciness and originality to their language, which, however foreign to the purity of Attic Greek, is more animating and attractive than the prolix and languid periods of Libanius, or the vague metaphysics of Iamblichus. Julian perceived the danger, and resented this usurpation, as it were, of the arms of Paganism, and their employment against their legitimate parent. It is not, indeed, quite clear how far, or in what manner, the prohibition of Julian affected the

Education  
of the  
higher  
classes.

Christians. A general system of education, for the free and superior classes, had gradually spread through the empire (2). Each city maintained a certain number of professors, according to its size and population, who taught grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy. They were appointed by the magistracy, and partly paid from the municipal funds. Vespasian first assigned stipends to professors in Rome, the Antonines extended the establishment to the other cities of the empire. They received two kinds of emoluments; the salary from the city, and a small fixed gratuity from their scholars. They enjoyed considerable immunities, exemption from military and civil service, and from all ordinary taxation. There can be no doubt that this education, as originally designed, was more or less intimately allied with the ancient religion. The grammarians, the poets (3), the orators, the philosophers of Greece and Rome were

(1) Socrat. iii. 13.

(2) There is an essay on the professors and general system of education by Monsieur Naudet, *Mém. de l'Institut*, vol. x. p. 399.

(3) Homer, then considered, if not the parent, the great authority for the Pagan mythology, was the elementary school-book.

the writers whose works were explained and instilled into the youthful mind. "The vital principle, Julian asserted, in the writings of Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates, Lysias, was the worship of the gods. Some of these writers had dedicated themselves to Mercury, some to the Muses. Mercury and the Muses were the tutelar deities of the Pagan schools." The Christians had glided imperceptibly into some of these offices, and perhaps some of the professors had embraced Christianity. But Julian declared that the Christians must be shameful hypocrites, or the most sordid of men, who, for a few drachms, would teach what they did not believe (1). The Emperor might, with some plausibility, have insisted that the ministers of public instruction paid by the state, or from public funds, should at least not be hostile to the religion of the state. If the prohibition extended no farther than their exclusion from the public professorships, the measure might have worn some appearance of equity; but it was the avowed policy of Julian to exclude them, if possible, from all advantages derived from the liberal study of Greek letters. The original edict disclaimed the intention of compelling the Christians to attend the Pagan schools; but it contemptuously asserted the right of the government to control men so completely out of their senses, and, at the same time, affected condescension to their weakness and obstinacy (2). But if the Emperor did not compel them to learn, he forbade them to teach. The interdict, no doubt, extended to their own private and separate schools for Hellenic learning. They were not to instruct in Greek letters without the sanction of the municipal magistracy. He added insult to this narrow prohibition: he taunted them with their former avowed contempt for human learning; he would not permit them to lay their profane hands on Homer and Plato. "Let them be content to explain Matthew and Luke in the churches of the Galileans (3)." Some of the Christian professors obeyed the imperial edict (4). Proæresius, who taught rhetoric with great success at Rome, calmly declined the overtures of the Emperor, and retired into a private station. Musonius, a rival of the great Proæresius, was silenced. But they resorted to an expedient which shows that they had full freedom of Christian instruction. A Christian Homer, a Christian Pindar, and other works were composed in which Christian sentiments and opinions were interwoven into the language of the original poets. The piety of the age greatly admired

(1) When Christianity resumed the ascendancy, this act of intolerance was adduced in justification of the severities of Theodosius against Paganism. *Petunt etiam, ut illis privilegia deferant, qui loquendi et docendi nostris communem usum Juliani lege proximâ denegarunt.* Ambros. *Epist. Resp. ad Symmach.*

(2) Julian. *Epist. xlii. p. 420.* Socrates, v. 18.

Theodoret, iii. 8. Sozomen, v. 18. Greg. Naz. Or. iii. p. 51. 96, 97.

(3) Julian. *Epist. xlv.*

(4) The more liberal Heathens were disgusted and ashamed at this measure of Julian. *Illud autem erat inclementis, obruendum perenni silentio, quod arcebat docere magistros, rhetoricos, et grammaticos, ritibus Christiani cultores.* Amm. Marcell. xx. c. 10.

these Christian parodies, which, however, do not seem to have maintained their ground even in the Christian schools (1).

Arts of Julian to undermine Christianity.

Julian is charged with employing unworthy or insidious arts to extort an involuntary assent to Paganism. Heathen symbols every where replaced those of Christianity. The medals display a great variety of deities, with their attributes. Jupiter is crowning the Emperor, Mars and Mercury inspire him with military skill and eloquence. The monogram of Christ disappeared from the labarum, and on the standards were represented the gods of Paganism. As the troops defiled before the Emperor, each man was ordered to throw a few grains of frankincense upon an altar which stood before him. The Christians were horror-stricken, when they found that instead of an act of legitimate respect to the Emperor, they had been betrayed into paying homage to idols. Some bitterly lamented their involuntary sacrilege, and indignantly threw down their arms; some of them are said to have surrounded the palace, and loudly avowing that they were Christians, reproached the Emperor with his treachery, and cast down the largess that they had received. For this breach of discipline and insult to the Emperor, they were led out to military execution. They vied with each other, it is said, for the honours of martyrdom (2). But the bloody scene was interrupted by a messenger from the Emperor, who contented himself with expelling them from the army, and sending them into banishment.

Persecutions.

Actual persecutions, though unauthorised by the imperial edicts, would take place in some parts from the collision of the two parties. The Pagans, now invested in authority, would not be always disposed to use that authority with discretion, and the Pagan populace would seize the opportunity of revenging the violation of their temples, or the interruption of their rites, by the more zealous Christians. No doubt the language of an address delivered to Constantius and Constans expressed the sentiments of a large party among the Christians. "Destroy without fear, destroy ye, most religious Emperors, the ornaments of the temples. Coin the idols into money, or melt them into useful metal. Confiscate all their endowments for the advantage of the Emperor of the government. God has sanctioned, by your recent victories, your hostility to the temples." The writer proceeds to thunder out the passages of the Mosaic law, which enforce the duty of the extirpation of idolaters (3). No doubt, in many places, the eager fanaticism of the Christians had outstripped the tardy movements of imperial zeal. In many cases it

(1) After the death of Julian, they were contemptuously thrown aside by the Christians themselves. *Τὼν δὲ οἱ πόνοι ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ μὴ γράφονται, λογίζονται.* Socrates, E. H. iii. 16.

(2) Jovian, Valentinian, and Valens, the future

Emperors, are said to have been among those who refused to serve in the army. Julian, however, declined to accept the resignation of the former.

(3) Julius Firmicus Maternus, *de Erroribus Religionum*, c. 29.



would now be thought an act of religion to reject, in others, it would be impossible to satisfy, the demands for restitution. The best authenticated acts of direct persecution relate to these disputes. Nor can Julian himself be exculpated from the guilt, if not of conniving at, of faintly rebuking these tumultuous acts of revenge or of wanton outrage. In some of the Syrian towns, Gaza, Hieropolis, and Cæsarea, the Pagans had perpetrated cruelties too horrible to detail. Not content with massacring the Christians, with every kind of indignity, they had treated their lifeless remains with unprecedented outrage. They sprinkled the entrails of their victims with barley, that the fowls might be tempted to devour them. At Helopolis, their cannibal fury did not shrink from tasting the blood and the inward parts of murdered priests and virgins. Julian calmly expresses his regret that the restorers of the temples of the gods have in some instances exceeded his expressed intentions; which, however, seem to have authorised the destruction of the Christian churches, or at least some of their sacred places (1).

Restoration of temples.

Julian made an inauspicious choice in the battle-field on which he attempted to decide his conflict with Christianity. Christianity predominated to a greater extent in Constantinople and in Antioch than in any other cities of the empire. In Rome he might have appealed to the antiquity of Heathenism, and its eternal association with the glories of the republic. In Athens, he would have combined in more amicable confederacy the philosophy and the religion. In Athens his accession had given a considerable impulse to Paganism, the temples with the rest of the public buildings, had renewed their youth (2). Eleusis, which had fallen into ruin, now reassumed its splendour, and might have been wisely made the centre of his new system. But in Constantinople all was modern and Christian. Piety to the imperial founder was closely connected with devotion to his religion. Julian could only restore the fanes of the tutelary gods of old Byzantium; he could strip the fortune of the city of her Christian attributes, but he could not give a Pagan character to a city which had grown up under Christian auspices. Constantinople remained contumaciously and uniformly Christian. Antioch had been a chief seat of that mingled Oriental and Grecian worship of the Sun which had grown up in all the Hellenised parts of Asia; the

Julian contends on ill-chosen ground.

Constantinople. Antioch.

(1) Greg. Nazianz. Socrates, iii. 14, Sozomen, v. 9. Compare Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 116., who has referred the following passage in the Misopogon to these scenes.

Οἱ τὰ μὲν τῶν θεῶν ἀνέστησαν αὐτίκα τεμένη· τοὺς τάρους δὲ τῶν ἀθέων ἀνέστρεψαν πάντας ὑπὸ τοῦ συνθήματος, ὃ δὴ δέδοται παρ' ἐμοῦ πρῶν, οὕτως ἐπάρθεντες τὸν νοῦν, καὶ μετέωροι γενομένοι τὴν διανοίαν, ὥς καὶ πλεονῶντες ἐλθεῖν τοῖς εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς πλημ-

μελοῦσιν, ἢ βουλαμένω μοι ᾗν. Misopogon, p. 361.

Did he mean by the τάρου chapels like those built over the remains of St. Babylas, in the Daphne, at Antioch, or the churches in general?

(2) Mamertinus, probably, highly paints the ruin, that he may exalt the restorer. Ipsæ illæ bonarum artium magistræ et inventricies Athenæ omnem cultum publicè privaticque perdidierant. In miserandam ruinam condecerat Eleusina. Mamert. Grat. Actio. ix. p. 147.

name of Daphne given to the sacred grove, implied that the fictions of Greece had been domiciliated in Syria. Antioch was now divided by two incongruous, but equally dominant passions, devotion to Christianity and attachment to the games, the theatre, and every kind of public amusement. The bitter sarcasms of Julian on the latter subject are justified and confirmed by the grave and serious admonitions of Chrysostom. By a singular coincidence, Antioch came into collision with the strongest prejudices of Julian. His very virtues were fatal to his success in the re-establishment of Paganism; its connection with the amusements of the people Julian repudiated with philosophic disdain. Instead of attempting to purify the degenerate taste, he had all the austerity of a Pagan monk. Public exhibitions were interdicted to his reformed priesthood; once, at the beginning of the year, the Emperor entered the theatre, remained in undisguised weariness, and withdrew in disgust. He was equally impatient of wasting his time as a spectator of the chariot race; he attended occasionally, out of respect to the presiding deity of the games; saw five or six courses, and retired (1). Yet Paganism might appear to welcome Julian to Antioch. It had still many followers, who clung with fond attachment to its pomps and gay processions. The whole city poured forth to receive him; by some he was hailed as a deity. It happened to be the festival of Adonis, and the loud shouts of welcome to the Emperor were mingled with the wild and shrill cries of the women, wailing that Syrian symbol of the universal deity, the Sun. It might seem an awful omen that the rites which mourned the departure of the genial deity should welcome his ardent worshipper (2). The outward appearance of religion must have affected Julian with alternate hope and disappointment. From all quarters, diviners, augurs, magicians, enchanters, the priests of Cybele, and of the other Eastern religions, flocked to Antioch. His palace was crowded with men, whom Chrysostom describes as branded with every crime, as infamous for poisonings and witchcrafts. "Men who had grown old in prisons and in the mines, and who maintained their wretched existence by the most disgraceful trades, were suddenly advanced to places of dignity, and invested with the priesthood and sacrificial functions (3)." The severe Julian, as he passed through the city, was encircled by the profligate of every age, and by prostitutes, with their wanton laughter and shameless language. Among the former, the ardent, youthful, and ascetic preacher, probably included all the Theurgists of the philosophic school; the latter describes the festal processions, which no doubt retained much of their old voluptuous character. Julian ascended the lofty top of Mount Casius, to solemnise, under the

Julian at  
Antioch.

(1) Misopogon, p. 339, 340. Amm. xxii. 9.

(2) Evenerat iisdem diebus annuo cursu com-

pleto Adonica ritu veteri celebrari. Amm. Marc. xxii. 9.

(3) Chrysostom contra Gent.

broad and all-embracing cope of heaven, the rites of Jupiter Philius (1). But in the luxurious grove of Daphne, he was doomed to a melancholy disappointment. The grove remained with all its beautiful scenery, its shady recesses, its cool and transparent streams, in which the Heathen inhabitants of Antioch had mingled their religious rites with their private enjoyments. But a serious gloom, a solemn quiet, pervaded the whole place. The temple of Apollo, the magnificent edifice in which the devotion of former ages had sacrificed becatombs, where the clouds of incense had soared above the grove, and in which the pomp of Oriental worship had assembled half Syria, was silent and deserted. He expected (in his own words) (2) a magnificent procession, victims, libations, dances, incense, boys with white and graceful vests, and with minds as pure and unspotted, dedicated to the service of the god. He entered the temple; he found a solitary priest, with a single goose for sacrifice. The indignant Emperor poured out his resentment in the bitterest language; he reproached the impiety, the shameful parsimony of the inhabitants, who enjoyed the large estates attached to the temple, and thus neglected its services; who at the same time permitted their wives to lavish their treasures on the infamous Galileans, and on their scandalous banquets, called the *Maïuma*.

Temple on  
Mount  
Casius.  
The  
Daphne

Julian determined to restore the majesty of the temple and worship of Apollo. But it was first necessary to dispossess the Christian usurper of the sacred place. The remains of Babylas, the martyred Bishop of Antioch, who had suffered, probably in the Decian persecution, had been removed eleven years before to Daphne; and the Christians crowded to pay their devotions near his tomb. The Christians assert, that the baffled Apollo confessed himself abashed in the presence of the saint; his oracle dared not break silence (3). At all events, Julian determined to purify the grove from the contamination of this worship. The remains of Babylas were ordered to be transported back to Antioch. They were met by a solemn procession of a great part of the inhabitants. The relics were raised on a chariot, and conducted in triumph, with the excited multitude dancing before it, and thundering out the maledictory psalm: —“Confounded be all they that worship carved images, and delight in the vain idols.” Julian attempted to punish this outburst of popular feeling. But the firmness of the first victim who endured the torture, and the remonstrances of the Præfect Sallust, brought him back to his better temper of mind. The restoration of the temple proceeded with zealous haste. A splendid peristyle arose around it; when at midnight Julian received the intelligence that the temple

Remains  
of Ba-  
bylas.

(1) The Jupiter Philius, or Casius. This god was the tutelary deity of Antioch, and appears on the medals of the city. St. Martin, note to Le Beau, iii. 6.

(2) Misopogon, 362.

(3) Chrysostom, Orat. in S. Babylam.



Fire in the  
temple.

was on fire. The roof and all the ornaments were entirely consumed, and the statue of the god himself, of gilded wood, yet of such astonishing workmanship that it is said to have enforced the homage of the conquering Sapor, was burned to ashes. The Christians beheld the manifest wrath of Heaven, and asserted that the lightning had come down and smitten the idolatrous edifice. Julian ascribed the conflagration to the malice of the Christians. The most probable account is, that a devout worshipper had lighted a number of torches before an image of the Queen of Heaven, which had set fire to some part of the building. Julian exacted, as it were, reprisals on Christianity; he ordered the cathedral of Antioch to be closed. His orders were executed with insult to the sacred place, and the spoliation of the sacred vessels (1).

Alexan-  
dria.

Julian, in the meantime, was not regardless of the advancement of the Pagan interest in other parts of the empire. Alexandria could not be at peace while any king of religious excitement inflamed the minds of men. The character of George, the Arian bishop of Alexandria, is loaded by Heathen as well as by Christian writers with every kind of obloquy. His low birth; the base and sordid occupations of his youth; his servile and intriguing meanness in manhood; his tyranny in power, trace, as it were, his whole life with increasing odiousness. Yet, extraordinary as it may seem, the Arian party could find no man of better reputation to fill this important post; and George, the impartial tyrant of all parties, perished at last, the victim of his zealous hostility to Paganism. A chief cause of the unpopularity of George was the assertion of the imperial right over the fee-simple of the land on which Alexandria was built. This right was gravely deduced from Alexander the Great. During the reign of Constantius, George had seized every opportunity of depressing and insulting Paganism; he had interdicted the festivals and the sacrifices of the Heathen; he had pillaged the gifts, the statues, and ornaments of their temple; he had been heard, as he past the temple either of Serapis himself, or of the Fortune of the city, to utter the contemptuous expression, "How long will this sepulchre be permitted to stand (2)?" He had discovered a cave where the Mithriac mysteries were said to have been carried on with a horrible sacrifice of human life. The heads of a number of youths were exposed (probably disinterred from some old cemetery near which these rites had been established), as of the victims of this sanguinary idolatry. These insults and outrages rankled in the hearts of the Pagans. The fate of Artemius, the Duke of Egypt, the friend and abettor of George in all his tyrannical proceedings, prepared the way for that of George. Artemius was suspected of being concerned in the death of Gallus.

George,  
Arian  
Bishop  
of Alex-  
andria.

(1) Amm. Marc. xxii. 13. Theodor. iii. 11. So-  
zomen, v. 20.

(2) Amm. Marcell. xxii. 11. Socrates, iii. 2.

He was charged with enormous delinquencies by the people of Alexandria. Whether as a retribution for the former offence against the brother of Julian, or as the penalty for his abuse of his authority in his government, Artemius was condemned to death. The intelligence of his execution was the signal for a general insurrection of the Pagans in Alexandria. The palace of George was invested by a frantic mob. In an instant he was dragged forth, murdered, trampled under foot, dragged along the streets, and at length torn limb from limb. With him perished two officers of the empire, Dracontius, master of the mint, and the Count Diodorus; the one accused of having destroyed an altar of Serapis, the other of having built a church. The mangled remains of these miserable men were paraded through the streets on the back of a camel, and at length, lest they should be enshrined and worshipped as the relics of martyrs, cast into the sea. The Christians, however, of all parties, appear to have looked with unconcern on the fate of this episcopal tyrant (1), whom, the general hatred, if it did not excite them to assist in his massacre, prevented them from attempting to defend. Julian addressed a letter to the people of Alexandria. While he admitted, in the strongest terms, the guilt of George, he severely rebuked their violence and presumption in thus taking the law into their own hands, and the horrible inhumanity of tearing like dogs the bodies of men in pieces, and then presuming to lift up their blood-stained hands to the gods. He admitted that their indignation for their outraged temples and insulted gods might naturally madden them to just resentment; but they should have awaited the calm and deliberate course of justice, which would have exacted the due punishment from the offender. Julian secured to himself part of the spoils of the murdered prelate. George had a splendid library, rich not merely in the writings of the Galileans, but, what Julian esteemed as infinitely more precious, the works of the Greek orators and philosophers. The first he would willingly have destroyed, the latter he commanded to be carefully reserved for his own use (2).

His death.

In the place of George arose a more powerful adversary. Julian knew and dreaded the character of Athanasius, who, during these tumults, had quietly resumed his authority over the orthodox Christians of Alexandria. The general edict of Julian for the recall of all exiles contained no exception; and Athanasius availed himself of its protecting authority (3). Under his auspices, the church, even in these disastrous times, resumed its vigour. The Arians, terrified perhaps by the hostility of the Pagans, hastened to reunite themselves to the church; and Julian heard, with bitter indignation,

Athanasius.

(1) *Poterantque miserandi homines ad crudele supplicium devoti Christianorum adiumento defendi, ni Georgii odio omnes indiscretè flagrabant.* Ammian. Marcell. xxii. 11.

(2) Julian. Epist. ix. et x.

(3) Julian. Epist. xxvi. p. 398.

that some Pagan females had received baptism from Athanasius. Julian expressed his astonishment, not that Athanasius had returned from exile, but that he had dared to resume his see. He ordered him into instant banishment. He appealed, in a letter to the præfect, to the mighty Serapis, that if Athanasius, the enemy of the gods, was not expelled from the city before the calends of December, he should impose a heavy fine. "By his influence the gods were brought into contempt; it would be better, therefore, that 'this most wicked Athanasius' were altogether banished from Egypt." To a supplication from the Christian inhabitants of the city in favour of Athanasius, he returned a sarcastic and contemptuous reply, reminding the people of Alexandria of their descent from Pagan ancestors, and of the greatness of the gods they worshipped, and expressing his astonishment that they should prefer the worship of Jesus, the Word of God, to that of the Sun, the glorious and visible and eternal emblem of the Deity (1).

In other parts, justified perhaps in their former excesses, or encouraged to future acts of violence, by the impunity of the Alexandrians, Paganism awoke, if not to make reprisals by conversion, at least to take a bloody revenge on its Christian adversaries (2). The atrocious persecutions of the fanatic populace, in some of the cities of Syria, have already been noticed. The aged Mark of Arethusa was, if not the most blameless, at least the victim of these cruelties, whose life ought to have been sanctified even by the rumour which ascribed the preservation of Julian, when an infant, to the pious bishop. Mark was accused of having destroyed a temple; he was summoned to rebuild it at his own expense. But Mark, with the virtues, inherited the primitive poverty of the Apostles; and, even if he had had the power, no doubt, would have resisted this demand (3). But the furious populace, according to Sozomen, men, women, and schoolboys, seized on the old man, and inflicted every torment which their inventive barbarity could suggest. The patience and calm temperament of the old man resisted and survived the cruelties (4). Julian is said to have expressed no indignation, and ordered no punishment. The præfect Sallust reminded him of the disgrace to which Paganism was exposed, by being thus put to shame by a feeble old man.

The policy of Julian induced him to seek out every alliance which could strengthen the cause of Paganism against Christianity. Polytheism courted an unnatural union with Judaism; their bond of connection was their common hatred to Christianity. It is not clear whether Julian was sufficiently acquainted with the writings of the

Death of  
Mark of  
Arethusa.

Julian  
courts the  
Jews.

(1) Julian, Epist. xi. p. 378.

(2) Julian, Epist. x. p. 377.

(3) According to Theodoret, Ὁ δὲ, ἵστον εἰς ἀσκήσαν ἔφθ, τὸ ὁσολὸν γοῦν ἐν αὐτῷ.

δοῦναι, τῷ πάντα δοῦναι. E. H. iii. 7.

(4) Sozomen gives the most detailed account of this cruel scene, which was clearly a kind of popular tumult, which the authorities in no way interfered to repress. E. H. v. 10.



Christians, distinctly to apprehend that they considered the final destruction of the Jewish temple to be one of the great prophecies on which their religion rested. The rebuilding of that temple was bringing, as it were, this question to direct issue; it was an appeal to God, whether he had or had not finally rejected the people of Israel, and admitted the Christians to all their great and exclusive privileges. At all events, the elevation of Judaism was the depression of Christianity. It set the Old Testament, to which the Christians appealed, in direct and hostile opposition to the New.

The profound interest awakened in the Jewish mind showed that they embraced, with eager fervour, this solemn appeal to Heaven. With the joy which animated the Jew, at this unexpected summons to return to his native land, and to rebuild his fallen temple, mingled, no doubt, some natural feeling of triumph and of gratified animosity over the Christian. In every part of the empire the Jews awoke from their slumber of abasement and of despondency. It was not for them to repudiate the overtures of Paganism. The Emperor acknowledged their God, by the permission to build again the temple to his glory; and, if not as the sole and supreme God, yet his language affected a monotheistic tone, and they might indulge the fond hope that the re-establishment of the temple upon Mount Moriah might be preparatory to the final triumph of their faith, in the awe-struck veneration of the whole world; the commencement of the Messiah's kingdom; the dawn of their long-delayed, but, at length, approaching millennium of empire and of religious supremacy. Those who could not contribute their personal labour devoted their wealth to the national work. The extent of their sacrifices, the eagerness of their hopes, rather belong to the province of Jewish history. But every precaution was taken to secure the uninterrupted progress of the work. It was not an affair of the Jewish nation, but of the imperial government. It was entrusted to the ruler of the province, as the delegate of the Emperor. Funds were advanced from the public treasury; and, if the Jews themselves, of each sex and of every age, took pride in hallowing their own hands by assisting in heaping up the holy earth, or hewing the stone to be employed in this sacred design; if they wrought their wealth into tools of the precious metals, shovels and spades of silver, which were to become valued heirlooms, as consecrated by this pious service, the Emperor seemed to take a deep personal interest in the design, which was at once to immortalise his magnificence, and to assist his other glorious undertakings. The Jews, who acknowledged that it was not lawful to offer sacrifice except on that holy place, were to propitiate their God, during his expedition into Persia; and on his triumphant return from that region, he promised to unite with them in adoration in the re-

Determines to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem.

stored city and in the reconstructed fane of the great God of the Jews (1).

Inter-  
rupted.

Judaism and Paganism had joined in this solemn adjuration, as it were, of the Deity. Their vows were met with discomfiture and disappointment. The simple fact of the interruption of their labours, by an event, which the mass of mankind could not but consider præternatural, even as recorded by the Pagan historians, appeared, in the more excited and imaginative minds of the Christians, a miracle of the most terrific and appalling nature. Few, if any, of the Christians could have been eye-witnesses of the scene. The Christian world would have averted its face in horror from the impious design. The relation must, in the first instance, have come from the fears of the discomfited and affrighted workmen. The main fact is indisputable, that, as they dug down to the foundations, terrific explosions took place; what seemed balls of fire burst forth; the works were shattered to pieces; clouds of smoke and dust enveloped the whole in darkness, broke only by the wild and fitful glare of the flames. Again the work was renewed by the obstinate zeal of the Jews; again they were repelled by this unseen and irresistible power, till they cast away their implements, and abandoned the work in humiliation and despair. How far natural causes, the ignition of the foul vapours, confined in the deeply excavated recesses of the hill of the temple, according to the recent theory, will account for the facts, as they are related in the simpler narrative of Marcellinus, may admit of some question; but the philosophy of the age, whether Heathen or Christian, was as unable as it was unwilling to trace such appalling events to the unvarying operations of nature (2).

Christianity may have embellished this wonderful event, but Judaism and Paganism confessed by their terrors the prostration of their hopes. The work was abandoned; and the Christians of later ages could appeal to the remains of the shattered works and unfinished excavations, as the unanswerable sign of the divine wrath against their adversaries, as the public and miraculous declaration of God in favour of their insulted religion.

But it was not as Emperor alone that the indefatigable Julian laboured to overthrow the Christian religion. It was not by the public edict, the more partial favour shown to the adherents of Paga-

(1) In his letter to the Jews, he calls the God of the Jews, *κρείττων*; in his Theologic Fragment (p. 295.), *μέγας Θεός*.

(2) See M. Guizot's note on Gibbon, with my additional observations. There seems a strong distinction in point of credibility between miracles addressed to the terror and those which appeal to the calmer emotions of the mind, such as most of those recorded in the Gospel. The former, in the first place, are usually momentary, or, if prolonged, endure but a short time. But the passion of fear so completely unhinges and

disorders the mind, as to deprive it of all trustworthy power of observation or discrimination. In themselves, therefore, I should venture to conclude that terrific miracles, resting on human testimony, are less credible than those of a less appalling nature. Though the other class of emotions, those of joy or gratitude, or religious veneration, likewise disturb the equable and dispassionate state of mind requisite for cool reasoning, yet such miracles are in general both more calmly surveyed, and more permanent in their effects.

nism, the insidious disparagement of Christianity, by the depression of its ministers and apostles, and the earnest elevation of Heathenism, to a moral code and an harmonious religion, with all the pomp of a sumptuous ritual ; it was not in the council, or the camp, or the temple alone, that Julian stood forth as the avowed antagonist of Christianity. He was ambitious, as a writer, of confuting its principles and disproving its veracity : he passed in his closet the long nights of the winter, and continued, during his Persian campaign, his elaborate work against the faith of Christ. He seemed, as it were, possessed with an equal hatred of those whom he considered the two most dangerous enemies of the Roman empire, the Persians and the Christians. While oppressed by all the serious cares of organising and moving such an army as might bring back the glorious days of Germanicus or of Trajan ; while his ambition contemplated nothing less than the permanent humiliation of the great Eastern rival of the empire ; his literary vanity found time for its exercise, and in all his visions of military glory and conquest, Julian never lost sight of his fame as an author (1). It is difficult to judge from the fragments of this work, selected for confutation after his death by Cyril of Jerusalem, of the power, or even of the candour, shown by the imperial controversialist. But it appears to have been composed in a purely polemic spirit, with no lofty or comprehensive views of the real nature of the Christian religion, no fine and philosophic perception of that which in the new faith had so powerfully and irresistibly occupied the whole soul of man ; with no consciousness of the utter inefficiency of the cold and incoherent Pagan mysticism, which he endeavoured to substitute for the Gospel.

Writings  
of Julian.

Work  
against  
Christi-  
anity.

But, at least, this was a grave and serious employment. Whatever might be thought of his success as a religious disputant, there was no loss of dignity in the Emperor condescending to enlighten his subjects on such momentous questions. But, when he stooped to be the satirist of the inhabitants of a city which had ridiculed his philosophy and rejected his religion, the finest and most elegant irony, the keenest and most delicate wit, would scarcely have justified this compromise of the imperial majesty. But, in the *Misopogon*—the apology for his philosophic beard—Julian mingled the coarseness of the Cynic with the bitterness of personal indignity. The vulgar ostentation of his own filthiness, the description of the vermin which peopled his thick beard, ill accord with the philosophic superiority with which Julian rallies the love of amusement and gaiety among his subjects of Antioch. Their follies were at least more graceful and humane than this rude pedantry. There is certainly much felicity of sarcasm, doubtless much justice, in his animadversions on the dissolute manners, the

Miso-  
pogon.

(1) Julianus Augustus septem libros in expeditione Parthica adversum Christum evomit. Hieronym. Oper. Epist. lxx.



ingratitude for his liberality, the dislike of his severe justice, the insolence of their contempt for his ruder manners, throughout the Misopogon; but it lowers Julian from a follower of Plato, to a coarse imitator of Diogenes; it exhibits him as borrowing the worst part of the Christian monkish character, the disregard of the decencies and civilities of life, without the high and visionary enthusiasm, or the straining after superiority to the low cares and pursuits of the world. It was singular to hear a Grecian sophist, for such was undoubtedly the character of Julian's writings, extolling the barbarians, the Celts and Germans, above the polished inhabitants of Greece and Syria.

Julian sets  
forth on  
his Per-  
sian expe-  
dition,

Paganism followed with faithful steps, and with eager hopes, the career of Julian on the brilliant outset of his Persian campaign. Some of the Syrian cities through which he passed, Batne and Hierapolis, and Carrhæ, seemed to enter into his views, and endeavoured, with incense and sacrifice, to propitiate the gods of Julian (1). For the last time the Etruscan haruspices accompanied a Roman Emperor; but by a singular fatality, their adverse interpretation of the signs of heaven was disdained, and Julian followed the advice of the philosophers, who coloured their predictions with the bright hues of the Emperor's ambition (2).

Death of  
Julian.

The death of Julian did greater honour to his philosophy. We may reject as in itself improbable, and as resting on insufficient authority, the bitter sentence ascribed to him when he received his fatal wound. "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean (3)." He comforted his weeping friends; he expressed his readiness to pay the debt of nature, and his joy that the purer and better part of his being was so soon to be released from the gross and material body. "The gods of heaven sometimes bestow an early death as the best reward of the most pious." His conscience uttered no reproach; he had administered the empire with moderation, firmness and clemency; he had repressed the licence of public manners; he had met danger with firmness. His prescient spirit had long informed him that he should fall by the sword. And he thanked the everlasting deity that he thus escaped the secret assassination, the slow and wasting disease, the ignominious death; and departed from the world in the midst of his glory and prosperity. "It is equal cowardice to seek death before our time, and to attempt to avoid it when our time is come." His calmness was only disturbed by the intelligence of the loss of a friend. He who despised his own death lamented that of another. He reproved the distress of his attendants, declaring that it was humiliating to mourn over a prince already reconciled to the heavens and to the stars; and thus calmly

(1) Julian. Epist. xxvii. p. 399, Amm. Marc. xxii. 2.

(2) Amm. Marc. xxiii. v.

(3) Νενίκησας, Γάλιλαιε. Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. iii. 25.

discoursing with the philosophers Priscus and Maximus on the metaphysics of the soul, expired Julian, the philosopher and Emperor (1).

Julian died, perhaps happily for his fame. Perilous as his situation was, he might still have extricated himself by his military skill and courage, and eventually succeeded in his conflict with the Persian empire; he might have dictated terms to Sapor, far different from those which the awe of his name and the vigorous organisation of his army, even after his death, extorted from the prudent Persian. But in his other, his internal conflict, Julian could have obtained no victory, even at the price of rivers of blood shed in persecution, and perhaps civil wars, throughout the empire. He might have arrested the fall of the empire, but that of Paganism was beyond the power of man (2). The invasion of arms may be resisted or repelled, the silent and profound encroachments of opinion and religious sentiment will not retrograde. Already there had been ominous indications that the temper of Julian would hardly maintain its more moderate policy; nor would Christianity in that age have been content with opposing him with passive courage; the insulting fanaticism of the violent, no less than the stubborn contumacy of the disobedient, would have goaded him by degrees to severer measures. The whole empire would have been rent by civil dissensions; the bold adventurer would scarcely have been wanting, who, either from ambition or enthusiasm, would have embraced the Christian cause; and the pacific spirit of genuine Christianity, its high notions of submission to civil authority, would scarcely, generally or constantly, have resisted the temptation of resuming its seat upon the throne. Julian could not have subdued Christianity, without depopulating the empire; nor contested with it the sovereignty of the world, without danger to himself and to the civil authority; nor yielded, without the disgrace and bitterness of failure. He who stands across the peaceful stream of progressive opinion, by his resistance maddens it to an irresistible torrent, and is either swept away by it at once, or diverts it over the whole region in one devastating deluge (3).

Probable  
results of  
Julian's  
conflict  
with  
Christi-  
anity.

(1) Amin. Marc. *ibid.* Even the Christians, at a somewhat later period, did justice to the great qualities of Julian. The character drawn by the Pagan, Aurelius Victor, is adopted by Prudentius, who kindles into unusual vigour. Cupido laudis immodicæ; cultus numinum superstitiosus: audax plus, quam imperatorem decet, cui salus propria cum semper ad securitatem omnium, maxime in bello, conservanda est. Epit. p. 228.

Ductor fortissimus armis;  
Conditor et legum celeberrimus; ore manumque  
Consultor patriæ, sed non consultor habendæ  
Religionis; amans ter centum millia Divum;  
Perfidus ille Deo, sed non et perfidus orbi.

Apoth. 43o.

(2) Julian's attempt to restore Paganism was

like that of Rienzi to restore the liberties of Rome.

(3) Theodoret describes the rejoicings at Antioch on the news of the death of Julian. There were not only festal dancings in the churches and the cemeteries of the martyrs, but in the theatres they celebrated the triumph of the cross, and mocked at his vaticinations.

Ἡ δὲ Ἀντιόχου πόλις τὴν ἐκείνου μεμαθηκῖα σφαγὴν, δημοβοινίας ἐπέ- τέλει καὶ πανηγυρεῖς καὶ οὐ μόνον ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις ἐχόρευον καὶ τοῖς μαρ- τύρων σπηκαῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις τοῦ σταυροῦ τὴν νίκην ἐκήρυττον, καὶ τοῖς ἐκείνου μαντεύματιν ἐπετάβαζον. E. II. iii. 27.

## CHAPTER VII.

VALENTINIAN AND VALENS.

Lamentations of the Pagans at the death of Julian.

It is singular to hear the Pagans taking up, in their altered position, the arguments of the Christians. The extinction of the family of Constantine was a manifest indication of the divine displeasure at the abandonment of Paganism (1). But this was the calmer conclusion of less recent sorrow and disappointment. The immediate expression of Pagan regret was a bitter and reproachful complaint against the ingratitude of the gods, who made so bad a return for the zealous services of Julian. "Was this the reward for so many victims, so many prayers, so much incense, so much blood, shed on the altar, by night as well as by day. Julian, in his profuse and indiscriminate piety, had neglected no deity; he had worshipped all who lived in the tradition of the poets,—fathers and children, gods and goddesses, superior and subordinate deities; and they, instead of hurling their thunderbolts and lightnings, and all the armoury of Heaven, against the hostile Persians, had thus basely abandoned their sacred charge. The new Salmoneus, the more impious Lycurgus, the senseless image of a man (such were the appellations with which the indignant rhetorician alluded to Constantius), who had waged implacable warfare with the gods, quenched the sacred fires, trampled on the altars, closed or demolished or profaned the temples, or alienated them to loose companions,—this man had been permitted to pollute the earth for fifty years, and then departed by the ordinary course of nature; while Julian, with all his piety, and all his glory, had only given to the world a hasty glimpse of his greatness, and suddenly departed from their unsatisfied sight (2)." But, without regarding the vain lamentations of Paganism, Christianity calmly resumed its ascendancy. The short reign of Jovian sufficed for its re-establishment; and, as yet, it exacted no revenge for its sufferings and degradation under Julian (3). The character of the two brothers who succeeded to the empire, Valentinian and Valens, and their re-

Reign of Jovian.

Valentinian and Valens.

(1) Liban, *pro Templis*, ii. 184.

(2) Libanius insults, in this passage, the worship of the dead man, whose sarcophagus (he seems to allude to the *pix* or consecrated box in which the sacramental symbol of our Saviour's body was enclosed) is introduced into the *κλῆρος* of the gods. Monod, in Julian, i. p. 509.

(3) Themistius praises highly the toleration of Jovian. "Thy law, and that of God, is eternal and unchangeable; that which leaves the soul of every man free to follow that form of religion

which seems best to him." *Ad Jovian*, p. 81., ed Dindorf. He proceeds to assert, that the general piety will be increased by the rivalry of different religions. "The Deity does not demand uniformity of faith." He touches on the evils which had arisen out of religious factions, and urges him to permit supplications to ascend to Heaven from all parts of the empire for his prosperous reign. He praises him, however, for suppressing magic and Goetic sacrifices.



ligious policy, were widely at variance. Valentinian ascended the throne with the fame of having rejected the favour of Julian, and the prospects of military distinction, for the sake of his religion. He had withdrawn from the army rather than offer even questionable adoration to standards decorated with the symbols of idolatry. But Valentinian was content to respect those rights of conscience which he had so courageously asserted.

The Emperor of the West maintained a calm and uninterrupted toleration, which incurred the reproach of indifference from the Christian party, but has received the respectful homage of the Pagan historian (1). The immunities and the privileges of the Pagan priesthood were confirmed (2); the rites of divination were permitted, if performed without malicious intent (3). The prohibition of midnight sacrifices, which seemed to be required by the public morals, threatened to deprive the Greeks of their cherished mysteries. Prætextatus, then proconsul of Achaia, the head of the Pagan party, a man of high and unblemished character, represented to the Emperor that these rites were necessary to the existence of the Greeks. The law was relaxed in their favour, on the condition of their strict adherence to ancient usage. In Rome, the vestal virgins maintained their sanctity; the altar of Victory, restored by Julian, preserved its place; a military guard protected the temples from insult, but a tolerant as well as prudent provision, forbade the employment of Christian soldiers on this service (4). On the other hand, Valentinian appears to have retracted some of the lavish endowments conferred by Julian on the Heathen temples. These estates were re-incorporated with the private treasure of the sovereign (5). At a later period of his reign, there must have been some general prohibition of animal sacrifice; the Pagan worship was restricted to the offering of incense to the gods (6). But according to the expression of Libanius, they dared not execute this law in Rome, so fatal would it have been considered to the welfare of the empire (7).

A. D. 364.  
Toleration  
of Valenti-  
nian.

Laws of  
Valenti-  
nian.

Valens, in the East, as Valentinian, in the West, allowed perfect freedom to the public ritual of Paganism. But both in the East and in the West, the persecution against magic and unlawful divination told with tremendous force against the Pagan cause. It was the more fatal, because it was not openly directed against the religion, but against practices denounced as criminal, and believed to be real, by the general sentiment of mankind, and prosecuted by that

Prosecu-  
tions for  
magic.

(1) Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xxx, c. 9.

Testes sunt leges a me in exordio imperii mei dante, quibus unicuique quod animo imbibisset, colendi libera facultas tributa est. Cod. Theod. l. ix. tit. 16. l. 9.

(2) Cod. Theod. xii. 1. 60. 75.

(3) Cod. Theod. ix. 16. 9.

(4) Cod. Theod. xvi. 1. 1.

(5) Cod. Theod. x. 1. 8. The law reads as if it were a more general and indiscriminate confiscation.

(6) Lib. pro Templis, vii. p. 163., ed Reiske. This arose out of some recent and peculiar circumstances.

(7) Liban. vol. ii. p. 180.

fierce animosity which is engendered by fear. Some compassion might be felt for innocent victims, supposed to be unjustly implicated in such charges; the practice of extorting evidence or confession by torture, might be revolting, to those especially who looked back with pride and with envy to the boasted immunity of all Roman citizens from such cruelties; but where strong suspicion of guilt prevailed, the public feeling would ratify the stern sentence of the law against such delinquents; the magician or the witch would pass to execution amid the universal abhorrence. The notorious connection of any particular religious party with such dreaded and abominated proceedings, particularly if proved by the conviction of a considerable majority of the condemned from their ranks, would tend to depress the religion itself. This sentiment was not altogether unjust. Paganism had, as it were, in its desperation, thrown itself upon the inextinguishable superstition of the human mind. The more the Pagans were depressed, the hope of regaining their lost superiority, the desire of vengeance, would induce them to seize on every method of awing or commanding the minds of their wavering votaries. Nor were those who condescended to these arts, or those who in many cases claimed the honours annexed to such fearful powers, only the bigoted priesthood, or mere itinerant traders in human credulity; the high philosophic party, which had gained such predominant influence during the reign of Julian, now wielded the terrors and incurred the penalties of these dark and forbidden practices. It is impossible to read their writings without remarking a boastful display of intercourse with supernatural agents, which to the Christian would appear an illicit communion with malignant spirits. This was not indeed magic, but it was the groundwork of it. The theurgy, or mysterious dealings of the Platonic philosopher with the dæmons or still higher powers, was separated by a thin and imperceptible distinction from Goetic or unlawful enchantment. Divination, indeed, or the foreknowledge of futurity by different arts, was an essential part of the Greek and Roman religion. But divination had, in Greece at least, withdrawn from its public office. It had retired from the silenced oracles of Delphi or Dodona. The gods, rebuked, according to the Christian, offended, according to the Pagan, had withdrawn their presence. In Rome the Etruscan soothsayers, as part of the great national ceremonial, maintained their place, and to a late period preserved their influence over the public mind. But, in general, it was only in secret, and to its peculiar favourites, that the summoned or spontaneous deity revealed the secrets of futurity; it was by the dream, or the private omen, the sign in the heavens, vouchsafed only to the initiate, or the direct inspiration; or, if risked, it was by the secret, mysterious, usually the nocturnal rite, that the reluctant God was compelled to disclose the course of fate.

The persecutions of Valentinian in Rome were directed against magical ceremonies. The Pagans, who remembered the somewhat ostentatious lenity and patience of Julian on the public tribunal, might contrast the more than inexorable, the inquisitorial and sanguinary, justice of the Christian Valentinian, even in ordinary cases, with the benignant precepts of his religion. But justice with Valentinian, in all cases, more particularly in these persecutions, degenerated into savage tyranny. The Emperor kept two fierce bears by his own chamber, to which the miserable criminals were thrown in his presence, while the unrelenting Valentinian listened with ferocious delight to their groans. One of these animals, as a reward for his faithful service to the state, received his freedom, and was let loose into his native forest (1).

Cruelty of  
Valenti-  
nian.

Maximin, the representative of Valentinian at Rome, administered the laws with all the vindictive ferocity, but without the severe dignity, of his imperial master. Maximin was of an obscure and barbarian family, settled in Pannonia. He had attained the government of Corsica and Sardinia, and subsequently of Tuscany. He was promoted in Rome to the important office of superintendent of the markets of the city. During the illness of Olybius, the præfect of Rome, the supreme judicial authority had been delegated to Maximin. Maximin was himself rumoured to have dabbled in necromantic arts, and lived in constant terror of accusation till released by the death of his accomplice. This rumour may create a suspicion that Maximin was, at least at the time at which the accusation pointed, a Pagan. The Paganism of a large proportion of his victims is more evident. The first trial over which Maximin presided was a charge made by Chilon, vicar of the præfects, and his wife, Maximia, against three obscure persons for attempting their lives by magical arts : of these, one was a soothsayer (2). Cruel tortures extorted from these miserable men a wild string of charges at once against persons of the highest rank and of the basest degree. All had tampered with unlawful arts, and mingled up with them the crimes of murder, poisoning, and adultery. A general charge of magic hung over the whole city. Maximin poured these dark rumours into the greedy ear of Valentinian, and obtained the authority which he coveted, for making a strict inquisition into these offences, for exacting evidence by torture from men of every rank and station, and for condemning them to a barbarous and ignominious death. The crime of magic was declared of equal enormity with treason; the rights of Roman citizenship, and the special privileges granted by the imperial edicts, were suspend-

Trials in  
Rome be-  
fore Maxi-  
min.

(1) The Christians did not escape these legal murders, constantly perpetrated by the orders of Valentinian. In Milan, the place where three obscure victims were buried, was called *ad Innocentes*. When he had condemned the decu-

rions of three towns to be put to death, in a remonstrance against their execution, it was stated that they would be worshipped as martyrs by the Christians. *Ann. Marc. xxvii. 7.*

(2) *Harpuspex*.



Con-  
nection  
of these  
crimes  
with Pa-  
ganism.

ed (1); neither the person of senator nor dignitary was sacred against the scourge or the rack. The powers of this extraordinary commission were exercised with the utmost latitude and most implacable severity. Anonymous accusations were received; Maximin was understood to have declared that no one should be esteemed innocent whom he chose to find guilty. But the details of this persecution belong to our history only as far as they relate to religion. On general grounds, it may be inferred, that the chief brunt of this sanguinary persecution fell on the Pagan party. Magic, although, even at that time, perhaps, the insatiate curiosity about the future, the indelible passion for supernatural excitement, even more criminal designs, might betray some few professed Christians into this direct treason against their religion, was a crime which, in general, would have been held in dread and abhorrence by the members of the church. In the laws it is invariably denounced as a Pagan crime. The aristocracy of Rome were the chief victims of Maximin's cruelty, and in this class, till its final extinction, was the stronghold of Paganism. It is not assuming too much influence to the Christianity of that age, to consider the immoralities and crimes, the adulteries and the poisonings, which were mingled up with these charges of magic, as the vestiges of the old unpurified Roman manners. The Christianity of that period ran into the excess of monastic asceticism, for which the enthusiasm, to judge from the works of St. Jerom, was at its height; and this violation of nature had not yet produced its remote but apparently inevitable consequence—dissoluteness of morals. In almost every case recorded by the historian may be traced indications of Pagan religious usages. A soothsayer, as it has appeared, was involved in the first criminal charge. While his meaner accomplices were beaten to death by straps loaded with lead, the judge having bound himself by an oath that they should neither die by fire nor steel, the soothsayer, to whom he had made no such pledge, was burned alive. The affair of Hymettius betrays the same connection with the ancient religion. Hymettius had been accused, seemingly without justice, of malversation in his office of proconsul of Africa, in the supplies of corn to the metropolis. A celebrated soothsayer (*haruspex*), named Amantius, was charged with offering sacrifices, by the command of Hymettius, with some unlawful or treasonable design. Amantius resisted the torture with unbroken courage, but among his papers was found a writing of Hymettius, of which one part contained bitter invectives against the avaricious and cruel Valentinian; the other implored him, by sacrifices, to induce the gods to mitigate the anger of both the Emperors. Amantius suffered capital punishment. A youth named Lollian, convicted of inconsiderately copying a book of magic

(1) *Juris prisci justitia et divorum arbitria*. *Amm. Marc.*

incantations, and condemned to exile, had the rashness to appeal to the Emperor, and suffered death. Lollianus was the son of Lampadius, formerly præfect of Rome (1), and, for his zeal for the restoration of the ancient buildings, and his vanity in causing his own name to be inscribed on them, was called the Lichen. Lampadius, was probably a Pagan. The leader of that party, Prætextatus, whose unimpeachable character maintained the universal respect of all parties, was the head of a deputation to the Emperor (2), entreating him that the punishment might be proportionate to the offences, and claiming for the senatorial order their immemorial exemption from the unusual and illegal application of torture. On the whole, this relentless and sanguinary inquisition into the crime of magic, enveloping in one dreadful proscription a large proportion of the higher orders of Rome and of the West, even if not directly, must, incidentally, have weakened the cause of Paganism; connected it in many minds with dark and hateful practices; and altogether increased the deepening animosity against it.

In the East, the fate of Paganism was still more adverse. There is strong ground for supposing that the rebellion of Procopius was connected with the revival of Julian's party. It was assiduously rumoured abroad that Procopius had been designated as his successor by the expiring Julian. Procopius, before the soldiery, proclaimed himself the relative and heir of Julian (3). The astrologers had predicted the elevation of Procopius to the greatest height—of empire, as his partisans fondly hoped,—of misery, as the ingenious seers expounded the meaning of their oracle after his death (4). The Pagan and philosophic party were more directly and exclusively implicated in the fatal event, which was disclosed to the trembling Valens at Antioch, and brought as wide and relentless desolation on the East as the cruelty of Maximin on the West. It was mingled up with treasonable designs against the throne and the life of the Emperor. The magical ceremony of divination, which was denounced before Valens, was Pagan throughout all its dark and mysterious circumstances (5). The tripod on which the conspirators performed their ill-omened rites was modelled after that at Delphi; it was consecrated by magic songs and frequent and daily ceremonies, according to the established ritual. The house where the rite was held was purified by incense; a kind of charger

In the East, rebellion of Procopius. A. D. 365.

A. D. 368.

(1) Tillemont thinks Lampadius to have been a Christian; but his reasons are to me inconclusive.

(2) Ann. Marc. xxvii. 1. etc.

(3) Ann. Marc. xxvi. 6.

(4) See Le Beau, iii. p. 250.

ὥστε αὐτὸν τῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς μεγίσταις ἀρχαῖς γραψθέντων, ἐν τῷ μεγέθει τῆς συμφορᾶς γενέσθαι διασημότερον. He was deceived by the Genethliaci, Greg. Nyss. de Fato.

(5) Philostorgius describes it as a prediction of the Gentile oracles. Τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν χρηστικῶν. Lib. viii. c. 15.

I cannot but suspect that the prohibition of sacrifice mentioned by Libanius, which seems contrary to the general policy of the brothers, and was but partially carried into execution, may have been connected with these transactions.

made of mixed metals was placed upon the altar, around the rim of which were letters at certain intervals. The officiating diviner wore the habit of a Heathen priest, the linen garments, sandals, and a fillet wreathed round his head, and held a sprig of an auspicious plant in his hand; he chanted the accustomed hymn to Apollo, the god of prophecy. The divination was performed by a ring running round on a slender thread and pointing to certain letters, which formed an oracle in heroic verse, like those of Delphi. The fatal prophecy then pointed to the three first and the last letters of a name, like *Theodorus* as the fated successor of Valens.

Among the innumerable victims to the fears and the vengeance of Valens, whom the ordinary prisons were not capacious enough to contain, those who either were, or were suspected of having been entrusted with the fatal secret, were almost all the chiefs of the philosophic party. Hilary of Phrygia, with whom is associated, by one historian, Patricius of Lydia, and Andronicus of Caria, all men of the most profound learning (1), and skilled in divination, were those who had been consulted on that unpardoned and unpardonable offence, the enquiring the name of the successor to the reigning sovereign. They were, in fact, the conductors of the magic ceremony, and on their confession betrayed the secret circumstances of the incantation. Some, among whom appears the name of Iamblichus, escaped by miracle from torture and execution (2). Libanius himself (it may be observed, as evidence how closely magic and philosophy were mingled up together in the popular opinion) had already escaped with difficulty two charges of unlawful practices (3); on this occasion, to the general surprise, he had the same good fortune: either the favour or the clemency of the Emperor, or some interest with the general accusers of his friends, exempted him from the common peril. Of those whose sufferings are recorded, Pasiphilus resisted the extremity of torture rather than give evidence against an innocent man: that man was Eutropius, who held the rank of proconsul of Asia. Simonides, though but a youth, was one of the most austere disciples of philosophy. He boldly admitted that he was cognisant of the dangerous secret, but he kept it undivulged. Simonides was judged worthy of a more barbarous death than the rest; he was condemned to be burned alive; and the martyr of philosophy calmly ascended the funeral pile. The fate of Maximus, since the death of Julian, had been marked with strange vicissitude. With Priscus, on the accession of Valentinian, he was summoned before the imperial tribunal; the blameless Priscus was dismissed, but Maximus, who, according to his own friends, had displayed, during the life of Julian, a pomp and luxuriousness unseemly in a philosopher, was sent back to

(1) Zosimus, iv 15.

(2) See Zonaras, 13. 2.

(3) Vit. i. 114.



Ephesus and amerced in a heavy fine, utterly disproportioned to philosophic poverty. The fine was mitigated, but, in its diminished amount, exacted by cruel tortures. Maximus, in his agony, entreated his wife to purchase poison to rid him of his miserable life. The wife obeyed, but insisted on taking the first draught : — she drank, expired, and Maximus—declined to drink. He was so fortunate as to attract the notice of Clearchus, proconsul of Asia ; he was released from his bonds ; rose in wealth and influence, returned to Constantinople ; and resumed his former state. The fatal secret had been communicated to Maximus. He had the wisdom, his partisans declared the prophetic foresight, to discern the perilous consequences of the treason. He predicted the speedy death of himself and of all who were in possession of the secret. He added, it is said, a more wonderful oracle ; that the Emperor himself would soon perish by a strange death, and not even find burial. Maximus was apprehended and carried to Antioch. After a hasty trial, in which he confessed his knowledge of the oracle, but declared that he esteemed it unworthy of a philosopher to divulge a secret entrusted to him by his friends, he was taken back to Ephesus, and there executed with all the rest of his party who were implicated in the conspiracy. Festus, it is said, who presided over the execution, was haunted in after life by a vision of Maximus dragging him to judgment before the infernal deities (1). Though a despiser of the gods, a Christian, he was compelled by his terrors to sacrifice to the Eumenides, the avengers of blood ; and having so done, he fell down dead. So completely did the cause of the Pagan deities appear involved with that of the persecuted philosophers.

Nor was this persecution without considerable influence on the literature of Greece. So severe an inquisition was instituted into the possession of magical books, that, in order to justify their sanguinary proceedings, vast heaps of manuscripts relating to law and general literature were publicly burned, as if they contained unlawful matter. Many men of letters throughout the East, in their terror destroyed their whole libraries, lest some innocent or unsuspected work should be seized by the ignorant or malicious informer, and bring them unknowingly within the relentless penalties of the law (2). From this period, philosophy is almost extinct, and Paganism, in the East, drags on its silent and inglorious existence, deprived of its literary aristocracy, and opposing only the inert resistance of habit to the triumphant energy of Christianity.

Arianism, under the influence of Valens, maintained its ascendancy in the East. Throughout the whole of that division of the

State of  
Christianity in  
the East.

(1) Eunap. Vit. Maxim. Amm. Marc. xxix. 1.

(2) Amm. Marcell. xxix. 1. Inde factum est per Orientales provincias, ut omnes metu simi-

lium exurerent libraria omnia : tantus universos invaserat terror. xxix. 2. Compare Heyne, note on Zosimus.

empire, the two forms of Christianity still subsisted in irreconcilable hostility. Almost every city had two prelates, each at the head of his separate communion; the one, according to the powers or the numbers of his party, assuming the rank and title of the legitimate bishop, and looking down, though with jealous animosity, on his factious rival. During the life of Athanasius the see of Alexandria remained faithful to the Trinitarian doctrines. For a short period, indeed, the prelate was obliged to retire, during what is called his fifth exile, to the tomb of his father, but he was speedily welcomed back by the acclamations of his followers, and the baffled imperial authority acquiesced in his peaceful rule till his decease. But at his death, five years afterwards, were renewed the old scenes of discord and bloodshed. Palladius, the præfect of Egypt, received the imperial commission to install the Arian prelate, Lucius, on the throne of Alexandria. Palladius was a Pagan, and the Catholic writers bitterly reproach their rivals with this monstrous alliance. It was rumoured that the Pagan population welcomed the Arian prelate with hymns of gratulation as the friend of the god Serapis, as the restorer of his worship.

A. D. 373.

A. D. 370.

In Constantinople, Valens had received baptism from Eudoxus, the aged Arian prelate of that see. Sacerdotal influence once obtained over the feeble mind of Valens, was likely to carry him to any extreme; yet, on the other hand, he might be restrained and overawed by calm and dignified resistance. In general, therefore, he might yield himself up as an instrument to the passions, jealousies, and persecuting violence of his own party; while he might have recourse to violence to place Demophilus on the episcopal throne of Constantinople, he might be *awed* into a more tolerant and equitable tone by the eloquence and commanding character of Basil. It is unjust to load the memory of Valens with the most atrocious crime which has been charged upon him by the vindictive exaggeration of his triumphant religious adversaries. As a deputation of eighty Catholic ecclesiastics of Constantinople were returning from Nicomedia, the vessel was burned, the crew took to the boat, the ecclesiastics perished to a man. As no one escaped to tell the tale, and the crew, if accomplices, were not likely to accuse themselves, we may fairly doubt the assertion that orders had been secretly issued by Valens to perpetrate this wanton barbarity.

Interview  
with Basil.

The memorable interview with Saint Basil, as it is related by the Catholic party, displays, if the weakness, certainly the patience and toleration, of the sovereign—if the uncompromising firmness of the prelate, some of that leaven of pride with which he is taunted by Jerome.

During his circuit through the Asiatic provinces, the Emperor approached the city of Cæsarea in Cappadocia. Modestus, the violent and unscrupulous favourite of Valens, was sent before, to per-

suade the bishop to submit to the religion of the Emperor. Basil was inflexible. "Know you not," said the offended officer, "that I have power to strip you of all your possessions, to banish you, to deprive you of life?" "He," answered Basil, "who possesses nothing can lose nothing; all you can take from me is the wretched garments I wear, and the few books, which are my only wealth. As to exile, the earth is the Lord's; every where it will be my country, or rather my place of pilgrimage. Death will be a mercy; it will but admit me into life: long have I been dead to this world." Modestus expressed his surprise at this unusual tone of intrepid address. "You have never, then," replied the prelate, "conversed before with a bishop?" Modestus returned to his master. "Violence will be the only course with this man, who is neither to be appalled by menaces nor won by blandishments." But the emperor shrunk from violent measures. His humbler supplication confined itself to the admission of Arians into the communion of Basil; but he implored in vain. The Emperor mingled with the crowd of undistinguished worshippers; but he was so impressed by the solemnity of the Catholic service, the deep and full chanting of the psalms, the silent adoration of the people, the order and the majesty, by the calm dignity of the bishop and of his attendant clergy, which appeared more like the serenity of angels than the busy scene of mortal men, that, awe-struck and overpowered, he scarcely ventured to approach to make his offering. The clergy stood irresolute, whether they were to receive it from the infectious hand of an Arian; Basil, at length, while the trembling Emperor leaned for support on an attendant priest, condescended to advance and accept the oblation. But neither supplications, nor bribes, nor threats, could induce the bishop to admit the sovereign to the communion. In a personal interview, instead of convincing the bishop, Valens was so overpowered by the eloquence of Basil, as to bestow an endowment on the church for the use of the poor. A scene of mingled intrigue and asserted miracle ensued. The exile of Basil was determined, but the mind of Valens was alarmed by the dangerous illness of his son. The prayers of Basil were said to have restored the youth to life; but a short time after, having been baptized by Arian hands, he relapsed and died. Basil however maintained his place and dignity to the end (1).

But the fate of Valens drew on; it was followed by the first permanent establishment of the barbarians within the frontiers of the Roman empire. Christianity now began to assume a new and important function, that assimilation and union between the conquerors and the conquered, which prevented the total extinction of the Roman civilisation, and the oppression of Europe, by complete and almost hopeless barbarism. However Christianity might have dis-

Effect  
of Christi-  
anity in  
mitigat-  
ing the  
evils of  
barbarian  
invasion.

(1) Greg. Naz. Orat. xx.; Greg. Nyss. contra Eunom.; and the ecclesiastical historians in loco.



turbed the peace, and therefore, in some degree, the stability of the empire, by the religious factions which distracted the principal cities; however that foreign principle of celibacy, which had now become completely identified with it, by withdrawing so many active and powerful minds into the cloister or the hermitage, may have diminished the civil energies, and even have impaired the military forces of the empire (1), yet the enterprising and victorious religion amply repaid those injuries by its influence in remodelling the new state of society. If treacherous to the interests of the Roman empire, it was true to those of mankind. Throughout the whole process of the resettling of Europe and the other provinces of the empire, by the migratory tribes from the north and east, and the vast system of colonisation and conquest, which introduced one or more new races into every province, Christianity was the one common bond, the harmonising principle, which subdued to something like unity the adverse and conflicting elements of society. Christianity, no doubt, while it discharged this lofty mission, could not but undergo a great and desecrating change. It might repress, but could not altogether subdue, the advance of barbarism; it was constrained to accommodate itself to the spirit of the times; while struggling to counteract barbarism, itself became barbarised. It lost at once much of its purity and its gentleness; it became splendid and imaginative, warlike, and at length chivalrous. When a country in a comparatively high state of civilisation is overrun by a foreign and martial horde, in numbers too great to be absorbed by the local population, the conquerors usually establish themselves as a kind of armed aristocracy, while the conquered are depressed into a race of slaves. Where there is no connecting, no intermediate power, the two races co-exist in stern and irreconcilable hostility. The difference in privilege, and often in the territorial possession of the land, is increased and rendered more strongly marked by the total want of communion in blood. Intermarriages, if not, as commonly, prohibited by law, are almost entirely discountenanced by general opinion. Such was, in fact, the ordinary process in the formation of the society which arose out of the ruins of the Roman empire. The conquerors became usually a military aristocracy; assumed the property in the conquered lands, or, at least, a considerable share in the landed estates, and laid the groundwork, as it were, for that feudal system which was afterwards developed with more or less completeness in different countries of Europe.

One thing alone in some cases, tempered, during the process of

(1) Valens, perceiving the actual operation of this unwarlike dedication of so many able-bodied men to useless inactivity, attempted to correct the evil by law, and by the strong interference of the government. He invaded the mo-

nasteries and solitary hermitages of Egypt, and swept the monks by thousands into the ranks of his army. But a reluctant Egyptian monk would, in general, make but an indifferent soldier.

conquest, the irreclaimable hostility; in all, after the final settlement, moulded up together in some degree the adverse powers. Where, as in the Gothic invasion, it had made some previous impression on the invading race, Christianity was constantly present, silently mitigating the horrors of the war; and afterwards blending together, at least to a certain extent, the rival races. At all times, it became the connecting link, the intermediate power, which gave some community of interest, some similarity of feeling, to the master and the slave. They worshipped at least the same God, in the same church; and the care of the same clergy embraced both with something of an harmonising and equalising superintendence. The Christian clergy occupied a singular position in this new state of society. At the earlier period, they were, in general, Roman; later, though sometimes barbarian by birth, they were Roman in education. When the prostration of the conquered people was complete, there was still an order of people, not strictly belonging to either race, which maintained a commanding attitude, and possessed certain authority. The Christian bishop confronted the barbarian sovereign, or took his rank among the leading nobles. During the invasion, the Christian clergy, though their possessions were ravaged in the indiscriminate warfare; though their persons were not always secure from insult, or from slavery; yet, on the whole, retained, or very soon resumed, a certain sanctity, and hastened, before long, to wind their chains around the minds of the conquerors. Before a new invasion, Christianity had, in general, mingled up the invaders with the invaded; till at length Europe, instead of being a number of disconnected kingdoms, hostile in race, in civil polity, in religion, was united in a kind of federal Christian republic, on a principle of unity, acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope.

Influence  
of the  
clergy.

The overweening authority claimed and exercised by the clergy; their existence as a separate and exclusive caste, at this particular period in the progress of civilization, became of the highest utility. A religion without a powerful and separate sacerdotal order, even, perhaps, if that order had not in general been bound to celibacy, and so prevented from degenerating into an hereditary caste, would have been absorbed and lost in the conflict and confusion of the times. Religion, unless invested by general opinion in high authority, and that authority asserted by an active and incorporated class, would scarcely have struggled through this complete disorganisation of all the existing relations of society. The respect which the clergy maintained was increased by their being almost the exclusive possessors of that learning which commands the reverence even of barbarians, when not actually engaged in war. A religion which rests on a written record, however that record may be but rarely studied, and by a few only of its professed interpreters,

Their importance in this new state of things.

enforces the general respect to literary attainment. Though the traditional commentary may overload or supersede the original book, the commentary itself is necessarily committed to writing, and becomes another subject of honoured and laborious study. All other kinds of literature, as far as they survive, gladly rank themselves under the protection of that which commands reverence for its religious authority. The cloister or the religious foundation thus became the place of refuge to all that remained of letters or of arts. Knowledge brooded in secret, though almost with unproductive, yet with life-sustaining warmth, over these secluded treasures. But it was not merely an inert and quiescent resistance which was thus offered to barbarism ; it was perpetually extending its encroachments, as well as maintaining its place. Perhaps the degree to which the Roman language modified the Teutonic tongues may be a fair example of the extent to which the Roman civilisation generally modified the manners and the laws of the Northern nations.

Influence  
of Christianity  
on  
literature,

The language of the conquered people lived in the religious ritual. Throughout the rapid succession of invaders who passed over Europe, seeking their final settlement, some in the remotest province of Africa, before the formation of other dialects, the Latin was kept alive as the language of Western Christianity. The clergy were its conservators, the Vulgate Bible and the offices of the church its depositaries, unviolated by any barbarous interruption, respected as the oracles of divine truth. But the constant repetition of this language in the ears of the mingled people can scarcely have been without influence, in increasing and strengthening the Roman element in the common language, which gradually grew up from mutual intercourse, inter-marriage, and all the other bonds of community which blended together the various races.

on lan-  
guage.

The old municipal institutions of the empire probably owed their permanence, in no considerable degree, to Christianity. It has been observed in what manner the decurionate, the municipal authorities of each town, through the extraordinary and oppressive system of taxation, from guardians of the liberties of the people, became mere passive and unwilling agents of the government. Responsible for payments which they could not exact, men of opulence, men of humanity, shrunk from the public offices. From objects of honourable ambition, they had become burdens, loaded with unrepaid unpopularity, assumed by compulsion, and exercised with reluctance. The *defensors*, instituted by Valentinian and Valens, however they might afford temporary protection and relief to the lower orders, scarcely exercised any long or lasting influence on the state of society. Yet the municipal authorities at least retained the power of administering the laws ; and, as the law became more and more impregnated with Christian sentiment, it assumed

on the mu-  
nicipal in-  
stitutions.



something of a religious as well as civil authority. The magistrate became, as it were, an ally of the Christian bishop; the institutions had a sacred character, besides that of their general utility. Whatever remained of commerce and of art subsisted chiefly among the old Roman population of the cities, which was already Christian; and hence, perhaps, the guilds and fraternities of the trades, which may be traced up to an early period, gradually assumed a sort of religious bond of union. In all points, the Roman civilisation and Christianity, when the latter had completely pervaded the various orders of men, began to make common cause; and during all the time that this disorganisation of conquest and new settlement was taking place in this groundwork of the Roman *social* system, and the loose elements of society were severing by gradual disunion, a new confederative principle arose in these smaller aggregations, as well as in the general population of the empire. The church became another centre of union. Men incorporated themselves together, not only, nor so much, as fellow-citizens, as fellow-Christians. They submitted to an authority co-ordinate with the civil power, and united as members of the same religious fraternity.

Christianity, to a certain degree, changed the general habits of men. For a time, at least, they were less public, more private and domestic men. The tendency of Christianity, while the Christians composed a separate and distinct community, to withdraw men from public affairs; their less frequent attendance on the courts of law; which were superseded by their own peculiar arbitration; their repugnance to the ordinary amusements, which soon however, in the large cities, such as Antioch and Constantinople, wore off—all these principles of disunion ceased to operate when Christianity became the dominant, and at length the exclusive, religion. The Christian community became the people; the shows, the pomps, the ceremonial of the religion, replaced the former seasons of periodical popular excitement; the amusements, which were not extirpated by the change of sentiment, some theatrical exhibitions and the chariot race, were crowded with Christian spectators, Christians ascended the tribunals of law; not only the spirit and language of the New Testament, but likewise of the Old, entered both into the Roman jurisprudence and into the various barbarian codes, in which the Roman law was mingled with the old Teutonic usages. Thus Christianity was perpetually discharging the double office of conservator, with regard to the social institutions with which she had entered into alliance; and of mediator between the conflicting races which she was gathering together under her own wing. Where the relation between the foreign conqueror and the conquered inhabitant of the empire was that of master and slave, the Roman ecclesiastic still maintained his independence, and speedily regained his authority; he only admitted

on general habits.

the barbarian into his order on the condition that he became to a certain degree Romanised; and there can be no doubt that the gentle influence of Christian charity and humanity was not without its effect in mitigating the lot, or at least in consoling the misery of the change from independence, or superiority, to humiliation and servitude. Where the two races mingled, as seems to have been the case in some of the towns and cities, on more equal terms, by strengthening the municipal institutions with something of a religious character, and by its own powerful federative principle, it condensed them much more speedily into one people, and assimilated their manners, habits, and usages.

Early  
Christian-  
ity among  
the Goths.

Christianity had early, as it were, prepared the way for this amalgamation of the Goths with the Roman empire. In their first inroads, during the reign of Gallienus, when they ravaged a large part of the Roman empire, they carried away numbers of slaves, especially from Asia Minor and Cappadocia. Among these were many Christians. The slaves subdued the conquerors; the gentle doctrines of Christianity made their way to the hearts of the barbarous warriors. The families of the slaves continued to supply the priesthood to this growing community. A Gothic bishop (1), with a Greek name, Theophilus, attended at the council of Nice; Ulphilas, at the time of the invasion in the reign of Valens, consecrated bishop of the Goths during an embassy to Constantinople, was of Cappadocian descent (2). Among the Goths, Christianity first assumed its new office, the advancement of general civilisation, as well as of purer religion. It is difficult to suppose that the art of writing was altogether unknown to the Goths before the time of Ulphilas. The language seems to have attained a high degree of artificial perfection before it was employed by that prelate in the translation of the Scriptures (3). Still the Mæso-Gothic alphabet, of which the Greek is by far the principal element, was generally adopted by the Goths (4). It was universally disseminated; it was perpetuated, until the extinction or absorption of the Gothic race in other tribes, by the translation of the sacred writings. This was the work of Ulphilas, who, in his version of the Scriptures (5), is

Ulphilas's  
version of  
the Scrip-  
tures.

(1) Philostorgius, ii. 5.

(2) Socrates, ii. 41.

(3) The Gothic of Ulphilas is the link between the East and Europe, the transition state from the Sanscrit to the modern Teutonic languages. It is possible that the Goths, after their migration from the East to the north of Germany, may have lost the art of writing, partly from the want of materials. The German forests would afford no substitute for the palm-leaves of the East; they may have been reduced to the barbarous runes of the other Heathen tribes. Compare Bopp., Conjugations System.

(4) The Mæso-Gothic alphabet has twenty-five letters, of which fifteen are evidently Greek, eight Latin. The two, th and hw, to which the Greek and Latin have no corresponding sound,

are derived from some other quarter. They are most likely ancient characters. The th resembles closely the runic letter, which expresses the same sound. See St. Martin, note on Le Beau, iii. p. 120.

(5) The greater part of the fragments of Ulphilas's version of the Scriptures now extant is contained in the celebrated Codex Argenteus, now at Upsala. This splendid MS., written in silver letters, on parchment of a purple ground, contains almost the whole four Gospels. Knittel, in 1762, discovered five chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in a Palimpsest MS. at Wolfenbützel. The best edition of the whole of this is by J. Christ. Zahn. Weissenfels, 1805. Since that time, M. Mai has published, from Milan Palimpsests, several other fragments, chiefly of

reported to have omitted, with a Christian, but vain, precaution, the books of Kings, lest, being too congenial to the spirit of his countrymen, they should inflame their warlike enthusiasm. Whether the genuine mildness of Christianity, or some patriotic reverence for the Roman empire, from which he drew his descent, influenced the pious bishop, the martial ardour of the Goths was not the less fatal to the stability of the Roman empire. Christianity did not even mitigate the violence of the shock with which, for the first time, a whole host of Northern barbarians was thrown upon the empire, never again to be shaken off. This Gothic invasion, which first established a Teutonic nation within the frontier of the empire, was conducted with all the ferocity, provoked, indeed, on the part of the Romans by the basest treachery, of hostile races with no bond of connection (1).

The pacificatory effect of the general conversion of the Goths to Christianity was impeded by the form of faith which they embraced. The Gothic prelates, Ulphilas among the rest, who visited the court of Constantinople, found the Arian bishops in possession of the chief authority; they were the recognised prelates of the empire. Whether their less cultivated minds were unable to comprehend, or their language to express, the fine and subtle distinctions of the Trinitarian faith, or persuaded, as it was said, by the Arian bishops, that it was mere verbal dispute, these doctrines were introduced among the Goths before their passage of the Danube, or their settlement within the empire. The whole nation received this form of Christianity; from them it appears to have spread, first embracing the other branch of the nation, the Ostrogoths, among the Gepidæ, the Vandals, and the Burgundians (2). Among the barbaric conquerors was the stronghold of Arianism; while it was gradually repudiated by the Romans both in the East and in the West, it raised its head, and obtained a superiority which it had never before attained, in Italy and Spain. Whether more congenial to the simplicity of the barbaric mind, or in some respects cherished on one side by the conqueror as a proud distinction, more cordially detested by the Roman population, as the creed of their barbarous masters, Arianism appeared almost to make common cause with the Teutonic invaders, and only fell with the Gothic monarchies in Italy and in Spain. While Gratian and Valentinian the Second espoused the cause of Trinitarianism in the West (we shall hereafter resume the Christian history of that division of the empire),

Arianism  
of the  
Goths.

the other Epistles of St. Paul. Milan, 1819. St. Martin, notes to Le Beau, iii. 100. On the Gothic translation of the Scriptures. See Socrat. iv. 33. Sozom. vi. 37. Philostorgius, ii. 5. Compare Theodoret, v. 30, 31.

(1) It is remarkable to find a Christian priest employed as an ambassador between the Goths and the Romans, and either the willing or undesigning instrument of that stratagem of the

Gothic general which was so fatal to Valens. Ann. Marc. xxxi. 12.

(2) Sic quoque Visigothi a Valente Imperatore Ariani potius quam Christiani effecti. De cætero tam Ostrogothis, quam Gepidis parentibus suis per affectionis gratiam evangelizantes, hujus perfidiæ culturam edocentes omnem ubique linguæ hujus nationem ad culturam hujus sectæ incitavere. Jornand. c. 25.



by measures which show that their sacerdotal advisers were men of greater energy and decision than their civil ministers, it subsisted almost as a foreign and barbarous form of Christianity.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THEODOSIUS. ABOLITION OF PAGANISM.

THE fate of Valens summoned to the empire a sovereign not merely qualified to infuse a conservative vigour into the civil and military administration of the empire, but to compress into one uniform system the religion of the Roman world. It was necessary that Christianity should acquire a complete predominance, and that it should be consolidated into one vigorous and harmonious system. The relegation, as it were, of Arianism among the Goths and other barbarous tribes, though it might thereby gain a temporary accession of strength, did not permanently impede the final triumph of Trinitarianism. While the imperial power was thus lending its strongest aid for the complete triumph and concentration of Christianity, from the peculiar character of the mind of Theodosius, the sacerdotal order, on the strength and unity of which was to rest the permanent influence of Christianity during the approaching centuries of darkness, assumed new energy. A religious emperor, under certain circumstances, might have been the most dangerous adversary of the priestly power; he would have asserted with vigour, which could not at that time be resisted, the supremacy of the civil authority. But the weaknesses, the vices, of the great Theodosius, bowed him down before the aspiring priesthood, who, in asserting and advancing their own authority, were asserting the cause of humanity. The passionate tyrant, at the feet of the Christian prelate, deploring the rash resentment which had condemned a whole city to massacre; the prelate exacting the severest penance for the outrage on justice and on humanity, stand in extraordinary contrast with the older Cæsars, without remonstrance or without humiliation, glutting their lusts or their resentment with the misery and blood of their subjects.

A. D. 379.

The accession of Theodosius was hailed with universal enthusiasm throughout the empire. The pressing fears of barbaric invasion on every frontier silenced for a time the jealousies of Christian and Pagan, of Arian and Trinitarian. On the shore of each of the great rivers which bounded the empire, appeared a host of menacing invaders. The Persians, the Armenians, the Iberians, were prepared to pass the Euphrates or the eastern frontier; the Danube had already afforded a passage to the Goths; behind them

were the Huns in still more formidable and multiplying swarms ; the Franks and the rest of the German nations were crowding to the Rhine. Paganism, as well as Christianity, hastened to pay its grateful homage to the deliverer of the empire ; the eloquent Themistius addressed the Emperor in the name of the imperial city ; Libanius ventured to call on the Christian Emperor to revenge the death of Julian, that crime for which the gods were exacting just retribution ; Pagan poetry awoke from its long silence ; the glory of Theodosius and his family inspired its last noble effort in the verse of Claudian.

Theodosius was a Spaniard. In that province Christianity had probably found less resistance from the feeble provincial Paganism ; nor was there, as in Gaul, an old national religion which lingered in the minds of the native population. Christianity was early and permanently established in the Peninsula. To Theodosius, who was but slightly tinged with the love of letters, or the tastes of a more liberal education, the colossal temples of the East, or the more graceful and harmonious fabrics of Europe, would probably create no feeling but that of aversion from the shrines of idolatry. His Christianity was pure from any of the old Pagan associations ; unsoftened, it may, perhaps, be said, by any feeling for art, and unawed by any reverence for the ancient religion of Rome : he was a soldier, a provincial, an hereditary Christian of a simple and unquestioning faith ; and he added to all this the consciousness of consummate vigour and ability, and a choleric and vehement temperament.

Spain, throughout the Trinitarian controversy, perhaps from the commanding influence of Hosius, had firmly adhered to the Athanasian doctrines. The Manichean tenets, for which Priscillian and his followers suffered (the first heretics condemned to death for their opinions), were but recently introduced into the province.

Thus, by character and education, deeply impressed with Christianity, and that of a severe and uncompromising orthodoxy, Theodosius undertook the sacred obligation of extirpating Paganism, and restoring to Christianity its severe and inviolable unity. Without tracing the succession of events throughout his reign, we may survey the Christian Emperor in his acts ; first, as commencing, if not completing, the forcible extermination of Paganism ; secondly, as confirming Christianity, and extending the authority of the sacerdotal order ; and thirdly, as establishing the uniform orthodoxy of the Western Roman church.

The laws of Theodosius against the Pagan sacrifices grew insensibly more and more severe. The inspection of the entrails of victims, and magic rites, were made a capital offence. In 391, issued an edict prohibiting sacrifices, and even the entering into the temples. In the same year, a rescript was addressed to the court

Hostility  
of Theodo-  
sius to Pa-  
ganism.

and præfect of Egypt, fining the governors of provinces who should enter a temple, fifteen pounds of gold, and giving a kind of authority to the subordinate officers to prevent their superiors from committing such offences. The same year, all unlawful sacrifices are prohibited by night or day, within or without the temples. In 392, all immolation is prohibited under the penalty of death, and all other acts of idolatry under forfeiture of the house or land in which the offence shall have been committed (1).

The Pagan temples, left standing in all their majesty, but desecrated, deserted, overgrown, would have been the most splendid monument to the triumph of Christianity. If, with the disdain of conscious strength, she had allowed them to remain without victim, without priest, without worshipper, but uninjured, and only exposed to natural decay from time and neglect, posterity would not merely have been grateful for the preservation of such stupendous and graceful models of art, but would have been strongly impressed with admiration of her magnanimity. But such magnanimity was neither to be expected from the age or the state of the religion. The Christians believed in the existence of the Heathen deities, with, perhaps, more undoubting faith than the Heathens themselves. The dæmons who inhabited the temples were spirits of malignant and pernicious power, which it was no less the interest than the duty of the Christian to expel from their proud and attractive mansions (2). The temples were the strongholds of the vigilant and active adversaries of Christian truth and Christian purity, the enemies of God and man. The idols, it is true, were but wood and stone, but the beings they represented were real; they hovered, perhaps, in the air; they were still present in the consecrated spot, though rebuked and controlled by the mightier name of Christ, yet able to surprise the careless Christian in his hour of supineness or negligent adherence to his faith or his duty. When zeal inflamed the Christian populace to aggression upon any of these ancient and time-hallowed buildings, no doubt some latent awe lingered within; something of the suspense of doubtful warfare watched the issue of the strife. However they might have worked themselves up to the conviction that their ancient gods were but of this inferior and hostile nature, they would still be haunted by some apprehensions, lest they should not be secure of the protection of Christ, or of the angels and saints in the new tutelar hierarchy of Heaven. The old deities might not have been so completely rebuked and controlled as not to retain some power of injuring their rebellious votaries. It was at last, even to the faithful, a conflict between two unequal supernatural agencies, unequal indeed, particularly where the faith of the Christian was fervent and sincere, yet dependent for its event on the con-

(1) Cod. Theod. xvi. 10. 7. 41, 12.

(2) *Dii enim Gentium dæmonia, ut Scriptura*

*docet.* Ambros. Epist. Resp. ad Symmach. in init.



fidence of that faith, which sometimes trembled at its own insufficiency, and feared lest it should be abandoned by the divine support in the moment of strife.

Throughout the East and West, the monks were the chief actors in this holy warfare. They are constantly spoken of by the Heathen writers in terms of the bitterest reproach and contempt. The most particular accounts of their proceedings relate to the East. Their desultory attacks were chiefly confined to the country, where the numberless shrines, images, and smaller temples were at the same time less protected, and more dear to the feelings of the people. In the towns, the larger fanes, if less guarded by the reverence of their worshippers, were under the protection of the municipal police (1). Christianity was long almost exclusively the religion of the towns; and the term Paganism (notwithstanding the difficulties which embarrass this explanation) appears to owe its origin to this general distinction. The agricultural population, liable to frequent vicissitudes, trembled to offend the gods, on whom depended the plenty or the failure of the harvest. Habits are more intimately enwoven with the whole being in the regular labours of husbandry, than in the more various and changeable occupations of the city. The whole Heathen ritual was bound up with the course of agriculture: this was the oldest part both of the Grecian and Italian worship, and had experienced less change from the spirit of the times. In every field, in every garden, stood a deity; shrines and lesser temples were erected in every grove, by every fountain. The drought, the mildew, the murrain, the locusts, — whatever was destructive to the harvest or to the herd, was in the power of these capricious deities (2); even when converted to Christianity, the peasant trembled at the consequences of his own apostasy; and it is probable, that not until the whole of this race of tutelary deities had been gradually replaced by what we must call the inferior divinities of Paganising Christianity, saints, martyrs, and angels, that Christianity was extensively or permanently established in the rural districts (3).

During the reign of Constantine, that first sign of a decaying religion, the alienation of the property attached to its maintenance, began to be discerned. Some estates belonging to the temples were seized by the first Christian Emperor, and appropriated to the building of Constantinople. The favourites of his successor, as we have seen, were enriched by the donation of other sacred estates,

*Alienation  
of the  
revenue  
of the  
temples.*

(1) Τοιμαῖται μὲν οὖν καὶ ταῖς πό-  
λεσι, τὸ πολὺ δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἀγροῖς. Liban.  
pro Templis.

(2) Καὶ τοῖς γεαργοῦσιν ἐν αὐτοῖς αἱ  
ἐλπίδες, ὅσαι περὶ τε ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναι-  
κῶν, καὶ τέκνων καὶ βροτῶν, καὶ τῆς σπει-

ρομένης γῆς καὶ πεφυτευμένης. Liban. de  
Templ.

(3) This difference prevailed equally in the  
West. Fleury gives an account of the martyrdom  
of three missionaries by the rural population of  
a district in the Tyrol, who resented the aboli-  
tion of their deities and their religious cere-  
monies. Hist. Eccles. v. 64.

and even of the temples themselves (1). Julian restored the greater part of these prodigal gifts, but they were once more resumed under Valentinian, and the estates escheated to the imperial revenue. Soon after the accession of Theodosius, the Pagans, particularly in the East, saw the storm gathering in the horizon. The monks, with perfect impunity, traversed the rural districts demolishing all the unprotected edifices. In vain did the Pagans appeal to the episcopal authority; the bishops declined to repress the over-active, perhaps, but pious zeal of their adherents. Already much destruction had taken place among the smaller rural shrines; the temples in Antioch, of Fortune, of Jove, of Athene, of Dionysus, were still standing; but the demolition of one stately temple, either at Edessa or Palmyra, and this under the pretext of the imperial authority, had awakened all the fears of the Pagans. Libanius addressed an elaborate oration to the Emperor, "For the Temples (2)." Like Christianity under the Antonines, Paganism is now making its apology for its public worship. Paganism is reduced to still lower humiliation; one of its modest arguments against the destruction of its temples, is an appeal to the taste and love of splendour, in favour of buildings at least as ornamental to the cities as the imperial palaces (3). The orator even stoops to suggest that, if alienated from religious uses, and let for profane purposes, they might be a productive source of revenue. But the eloquence and arguments of Libanius were wasted on deaf and unheeding ears. The war against the temples commenced in Syria; but it was not conducted with complete success. In many cities the inhabitants rose in defence of their sacred buildings, and, with the Persian on the frontier, a religious war might have endangered the allegiance of these provinces. The splendid temples, of which the ruins have recently been discovered, at Petra (4), were defended by the zealous worshippers; and in those, as well as at Areopolis and Raphia, in Palestine, the Pagan ceremonial continued without disturbance. In Gaza, the temple of the tutelary deity, Marnas, the lord of men, was closed; but the Christians did not venture to violate it. The form of some of the Syrian edifices allowed their transformation into Christian churches; they were enclosed, and made to admit sufficient light for the services of the church. A temple at Damascus, and another at Heliopolis or Baalbec (5), were consecrated to the Christian worship. Marcellus of Apamea was the martyr in this holy warfare. He had signalled himself by

Oration of  
Libanius.

Syrian  
temples  
destroyed.

(1) They were bestowed, according to Libanius, with no more respect than a horse, a slave, a dog, or a golden cup. The position of the *slave* between the horse and the dog, as cheap gifts, is curious enough. Liban. Op. v. ii. p. 185.

(2) This oration was probably not delivered in the presence of Theodosius.

(3) Liban. pro Templis, p. 190.

(4) Laborde's Journey. In most of these build-

ings Roman architecture of the age of Antonines is manifest, raised in general on the enormous substructions of much earlier ages.

(5) If this (as indeed is not likely) was the vast Temple of the Sun, it is probable that a Christian church was enclosed in some part of its precincts. The sanctuary was usually taken for this purpose.

the destruction of the temples in his own city, particularly that of Jupiter, whose solid foundations defied the artificers and soldiery employed in the work of demolition, and required the aid of miracle to undermine them. But, on an expedition into the district of Apamea, called the Aulon, the rude inhabitants rose in defence of their sacred edifice, seized Marcellus and burned him alive. The synod of the province refused to revenge on his barbarous enemies, a death so happy for Marcellus, and so glorious for his family (1).

The work of demolition was not long content with these less famous edifices, these outworks of Paganism; it aspired to attack one of its strongest citadels, and by the public destruction of one of the most celebrated temples in the world, to announce that Polytheism had for ever lost its hold upon the minds of men.

It was considered the highest praise of the magnificent temple in Edessa, of which the roof was of remarkable construction, and which contained in its secret sanctuary certain very celebrated statues of wrought iron, and whose fall had excited the indignant eloquence of Libanius, to compare it to the Serapion in Alexandria. The Serapion, at that time, appeared secure in the superstition, which connected its inviolable sanctity, and the honour of its god (2), with the rise and fall of the Nile, with the fertility and existence of Egypt, and, as Egypt was the granary of the East, of Constantinople. The Pagans had little apprehension that the Serapion itself, before many years, would be levelled to the ground.

Temple of  
Serapis at  
Alexan-  
dria.

The temple of Serapis, next to that of Jupiter in the Capitol, was the proudest monument of Pagan religious architecture (3). Like the more celebrated structures of the East, and that of Jerusalem in its glory, it comprehended within its precincts a vast mass of buildings, of which the temple itself formed the centre. It was built on an artificial hill, in the old quarter of the city, called Rhacotis, to which the ascent was by a hundred steps. All the substructure was vaulted over; and in these dark chambers, which communicated with each other, were supposed to be carried on the most fearful, and, to the Christian, abominable mysteries. All around the spacious level platform were the habitations of the priests, and the ascetics dedicated to the worship of the god. Within these outworks of this city, rather than temple, was a square, surrounded on all sides with a magnificent portico. In the centre arose the temple, on pillars of enormous magnitude and beautiful proportion. The work either of Alexander himself or of the first Ptolemy, aspired to unite the colossal grandeur of Egyptian with the fine harmony of Grecian art. The god himself was the

A. D. 389.  
or 391.

(1) Sozomen, vii. 15. Theodoret, v. 24.

(2) Libanius expresses himself to this effect.

(3) Post Capitulum, quo se venerabilis Roma

in æternum attollit nihil orbis terrarum ambitiosius cernat, Ammian. Marcell. xxii. 16.



Worship  
of Serapis.

especial object of adoration throughout the whole country, and throughout every part of the empire into which the Egyptian worship had penetrated (1), but more particularly in Alexandria; and the wise policy of the Ptolemys had blended together, under this pliant and all-embracing religion, the different races of their subjects. Egyptian and Greek met as worshippers of Serapis. The Serapis of Egypt was said to have been worshipped for ages at Sinope; he was transported from that city with great pomp and splendour, to be reincorporated, as it were, and reidentified with his ancient prototype. While the Egyptians worshipped in Serapis the great vivific principle of the universe, the fecundating Nile, holding the Nilometer for his sceptre, the Lord of Amen-ti, the President of the regions beyond the grave; the Greeks, at the same time, recognised the blended attributes of their Dionysus, Helios, Æsculapius, and Hades (2).

Statue of  
Serapis.

The colossal statue of Serapis embodied these various attributes (3). It filled the sanctuary: its outstretched and all-embracing arms touched the walls; the right the one, the left the other. It was said to have been the work of Sesostris; it was made of all the metals fused together, gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin; it was inlaid with all kinds of precious stones; the whole was polished, and appeared of an azure colour. The measure or bushel, the emblem of productiveness or plenty, crowned its head. By its side stood the symbolic three-headed animal, one the forepart of a lion, one of a dog, one of a wolf. In this the Greeks saw the type of their poetic Cerberus (4). The serpent, the symbol of eternity, wound round the whole, and returned resting its head on the hand of the god.

The first  
attacks on  
Paganism.

The more completely the adoration of Serapis had absorbed the worship of the whole Egyptian pantheon, the more eagerly Christianity desired to triumph over the representative of Polytheism. However, in the time of Hadrian, the philosophic party may have endeavoured to blend and harmonise the two faiths (5), they stood now in their old direct and irreconcilable opposition. The suppression of the internal feuds between the opposite parties in Alexandria, enabled Christianity to direct all its concentrated force against Paganism. Theophilus, the archbishop, was a man of boldness and activity, eager to seize, and skilful to avail himself of, every opportunity to inflame the popular mind against the Heathens. A priest of Serapis was accused and convicted of practising those licentious

(1) In Egypt alone he had forty-two temples; innumerable others in every part of the Roman empire. Aristid. Orat. in Canop.

(2) This appears to me the most natural interpretation of the celebrated passage in Tacitus. Compare De Guigniaut, *Le Dieu Serapis et son Origine*, originally written as a note for Bourneuf's Translation of Tacitus.

(3) The statue is described by Macrobius,

Saturn. i. 20., Clemens Alexandrin. Exhortat. ad Gent. i. p. 42.; Rufinus, E. H. xii. 23.

(4) According to the interpretation of Macrobius, the three heads represented the past, the present, and the future; the rapacious wolf the past, the central lion the intermediate present, the fawning dog the hopeful future.

(5) See the Letter of Hadrian, Vol. II. p. 155.

designs against the virtue of the female worshippers, so frequently attributed to the priesthood of the Eastern religions. The noblest and most beautiful women were persuaded to submit to the embraces of the god, whose place, under the favourable darkness caused by the sudden extinction of the lamps in the temple, was filled by the priest. These inauspicious rumours prepared the inevitable collision. A neglected temple of Osiris or Dionysus had been granted by Constantius to the Arians of Alexandria. Theophilus obtained from the Emperor a grant of the vacant site, for a new church, to accommodate the increasing numbers of the Catholic Christians. On digging the foundation, there were discovered many of the obscene symbols, used in the Bacchic or Osirian mysteries. Theophilus, with more regard to the success of his cause than to decency, exposed these ludicrous or disgusting objects, in the public market place, to the contempt and abhorrence of the people. The Pagans, indignant at this treatment of their sacred symbols, and maddened by the scorn and ridicule of the Christians, took up arms. The streets ran with blood; and many Christians who fell in this tumultuous fray received the honours of martyrdom. A philosopher, named Olympus, placed himself at the head of the Pagan party. Olympus had foreseen and predicted the ruin of the external worship of Polytheism. He had endeavoured to implant a profound feeling in the hearts of the Pagans which might survive the destruction of their ordinary objects of worship. "The statues of the gods are but perishable and material images; the eternal intelligences, which dwelt within them, have withdrawn to the heavens (1)." Yet Olympus hoped, and at first with his impassioned eloquence succeeded, in rousing his Pagan compatriots to a bold defiance of the public authorities in support of their religion; faction and rivalry supplied what was wanting to faith, and it appeared that Paganism would likewise boast its army of martyrs,—martyrs, not indeed through patient submission to the persecutor, but in heroic despair perishing with their gods.

Olympus  
the philo-  
sopher.

The Pagans at first were the aggressors; they sallied from their fortress, the Serapion, seized the unhappy Christians whom they met, forced them to sacrifice on their altar, or slew them upon it, or threw them into the deep trench defiled with the blood and offal of sacrifice. In vain Evagrius, the præfect of Egypt, and Romanus, the commander of the troops, appeared before the gates of the Temple, remonstrated with the garrison, who appeared at the windows, against their barbarities, and menaced them with the just vengeance of the law. They were obliged to withdraw, baffled and disregarded, and to await the orders of the Emperor. Olympus ex-

War in the  
city.

(1) "Τὴν φεαρτὴν καὶ ἰδάλματα τινὰς ἐνοικῆσαι αὐτῶν, καὶ εἰς οὐρανὸν λήγον εἶναι τὰ ἄλλαματα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀποστῆναι. Sozom. H. E. vii. 15.  
το ἀρανισμὸν ὑπομένειν· δυνάμεις δὲ

Flight of  
Olympus.

horted his followers to the height of religious heroism. "Having made a glorious sacrifice of our enemies, let us immolate ourselves and perish with our gods," But before the rescript arrived, Olympus had disappeared : he had stolen out of the Temple, and embarked for Italy. The Christian writers do honour to his sagacity, or to his prophetic powers, at the expense of his courage and fidelity to his party. In the dead of night, when all was slumbering around, and all the gates closed, he had heard the Christian Alleluia pealing from a single voice through the silent Temple. He acknowledged the sign, or the omen, and anticipated the unfavourable sentence of the Emperor, the fate of his faction and of his gods.

Rescript  
of Theodo-  
sius.

The eastern Pagans, it should seem, were little acquainted with the real character of Theodosius. When the rescript arrived they laid down their arms, and assembled in peaceful array before the Temple, as if they expected the sentence of the Emperor in their own favour (1). The officer began; the first words of the rescript plainly intimated the abhorrence of Theodosius against idolatry. Cries of triumph from the Christians interrupted the proceedings; the panic-stricken Pagans, abandoning their temple and their god, silently dispersed; they sought out the most secret places of refuge; they fled their country. Two of the celebrated pontiffs, one of Amoun, one of "the Ape," retired to Constantinople, where the one, Ammonius, taught in a school, and continued to deplore the fall of Paganism; Helladius, the other, was known to boast the part he had taken in the sedition of Alexandria, in which, with his own hand, he had slain nine Christians (2).

The imperial rescript at once went beyond and fell short of the fears of the Pagans. It disdained to exact vengeance for the blood of the Christian martyrs, who had been so happy as to lay down their lives for their Redeemer; but it commanded the destruction of the idolatrous temples; it confiscated all the ornaments, and ordered the statues to be melted or broken up for the benefit of the poor.

The tem-  
ple as-  
sailed.

Theophilus hastened in his triumphant zeal to execute the ordinance of the Emperor. Marching, with the præfect at the head of the military, they ascended the steps to the temple of Serapis. They surveyed the vacant chambers of the priests and the ascetics; they paused to pillage the library (3); they entered the deserted sanctuary; they stood in the presence of the god. The sight of this colossal image, for centuries an object of worship, struck awe to

(1) If the oration of Libanius, exhorting the Emperor to revenge the death of Julian, was really presented to Theodosius, it betrays something of the same ignorance. He seems to think his arguments not unlikely to meet with success; at all events, he appears not to have the least notion that Theodosius would not respect the memory of the apostate.

(2) Socrat, Eccl. Hist. v. 16. Helladius is mentioned in a law of Theodosius the younger, as a celebrated grammarian elevated to certain honours. This law is, however, dated 425; at least five and thirty years after this transaction.

(3) Nos vidimus armaria librorum, quibus direptis exinanita et a nostris hominibus, nostris temporibus inemorant. Oros. vi. 13.



the hearts of the Christians themselves. They stood silent, inactive, trembling. The archbishop alone maintained his courage : he commanded a soldier to proceed to the assault. The soldier struck the statue with his hatchet on the knee. The blow echoed through the breathless hall, but no sound or sign of Divine vengeance ensued ; the roof of the Temple fell not to crush the sacrilegious assailant, nor did the pavement heave and quake beneath his feet. The emboldened soldier climbed up to the head and struck it off ; it rolled upon the ground. Serapis gave no sign of life, but a large colony of rats, disturbed in their peaceful abode, ran about on all sides. The passions of the multitude are always in extremes. From breathless awe they passed at once to ungovernable mirth. The work of destruction went on amid peals of laughter, coarse jets, and shouts of acclamation ; and as the fragments of the huge body of Serapis were dragged through the streets, the Pagans, with that revulsion of feeling common to the superstitious populace, joined in the insult and mockery against their unresisting and self-abandoned god (1).

The solid walls and deep foundations of the Temple offered more unsurmountable resistance to the baffled zeal of the Christians ; the work of demolition proceeded but slowly with the massive architecture (2) ; and some time after a church was erected in the precincts, to look down upon the ruins of idolatry, which still frowned in desolate grandeur upon their conquerors (3).

Yet the Christians, even after their complete triumph, were not without some lingering terrors ; the Pagans not without hopes that a fearful vengeance would be exacted from the land for this sacrilegious extirpation of their ancient deities. Serapis was either the Nile, or the deity who presided over the periodical inundations of the river. The Nilometer, which measured the rise of the waters, was kept in the Temple. Would the indignant river refuse its fertilising moisture ; keep sullenly within its banks, and leave the ungrateful land blasted with perpetual drought and barrenness ? As the time of the inundation approached, all Egypt was in a state of trembling suspense. Long beyond the accustomed day the waters remained at their usual level ; there was no sign of overflowing. The people began to murmur ; the murmurs swelled into indignant remonstrances ; the usual rites and sacrifices were demanded from

(1) They were said to have discovered several of the tricks by which the priests of Serapis imposed on the credulity of their worshippers. An aperture of the wall was so contrived, that the light of the sun, at a particular time, fell on the face of Serapis. The sun was then thought to visit Serapis ; and at the moment of their meeting, the flashing light threw a smile on the lips of the Deity. There is another story of a magnet on the roof, which, as in the fable about Mahomet's coffin, raised either a small statue of the

Deity, or the sun in a car with four horses, to the roof, and there held it suspended. A Christian withdrew the magnet, and the car fell, and was dashed to pieces on the pavement.

(2) Compare Eunap. Vit. Ædesii, p. 44. edit. Boissonade.

(3) The Christians rejoiced in discovering the cross in various parts of the building ; they were inclined to suppose it miraculous or prophetic of their triumph. But, in fact, the *crux ansata* is a common hieroglyphic, a symbol of life.

the reluctant præfect, who despatched a hasty messenger to the Emperor for instructions. There was every appearance of a general insurrection; the Pagans triumphed in their turn; but before the answer of the Emperor arrived, which replied, in uncompromising faith, "that if the inundation of the river could only be obtained by magic and impious rites, let it remain dry; the fertility of Egypt must not be purchased by an act of infidelity to God (1)." Suddenly, the waters began to swell, an inundation more full and extensive than usual spread over the land, and the versatile Pagans had now no course but to join again with the Christians in mockeries against the impotence of their gods.

But Christianity was not content with the demolition of the Serapion; its predominance throughout Egypt may be estimated by the bitter complaint of the Pagan writer: "Whoever wore a black dress (the monks are designated by this description) was invested in tyrannical power; philosophy and piety to the gods were compelled to retire into secret places, and to dwell in contented poverty and dignified meanness of appearance. The temples were turned into tombs for the adoration of the bones of the basest and most depraved of men, who had suffered the penalty of the law, whom they made their gods (2)." Such was the light in which the martyr-worship of the Christians appeared to the Pagans.

The demolition of the Serapion was a penalty inflicted on the Pagans of Alexandria for their sedition and sanguinary violence; but the example was too encouraging, the hope of impunity under the present government too confident, not to spread through other cities of Egypt. To Canopus, where the principle of humidity was worshipped in the form of a vase, with a human head, Theophilus, who considered Canopus within his diocese, marched at the head of his triumphant party, demolished the temples, abolished the rites, which were distinguished for their dissolute licence, and established monasteries in the place. Canopus, from a city of revel and debauchery, became a city of monks (3).

The persecution extended throughout Egypt; but the vast buildings which even now subsist, the successive works of the Pharaohs, the Ptolemies, and the Roman Emperors, having triumphed alike over time, Christianity, and Mahommedanism, show either some reverent reluctance to deprive the country of its most magnificent ornaments, or the inefficiency of the instruments which they employed in the work of devastation. For once it was less easy for

(1) Improbable as it may seem, that such an answer should be given by a statesman like Theodosius, yet it is strongly characteristic of the times. The Emperor neither denies the power of the malignant demons worshipped by the idolaters, nor the efficacy of enchantments, to obtain their favour, and to force from them the retarded overflow of the river.

(2) Eunap. Vit. Ædesii, loc. cit.

(3) The Christians laughed at Canopus being called "the conqueror of the gods." The origin of this name was, that the principle of fire, the god of the Chaldeans, had been extinguished by the water within the statue of Canopus, the principle of humidity.

men to destroy than to preserve; the power of demolition was rebuked before the strength and solidity of these erections of primeval art.

The war, as we have seen, raged with the same partial and imperfect success in Syria; with less, probably, in Asia Minor; least of all in Greece. The demolition was no where general or systematic. Wherever monastic Christianity was completely predominant, there emulous zeal excited the laity to these aggressions on Paganism. But in Greece the noblest buildings of antiquity, at Olympia, Eleusis, Athens (1), show in their decay the slower process of neglect and time, of accident and the gradual encroachment of later barbarism, rather than the iconoclastic destructiveness of early religious zeal (2).

In the West, the task of St. Martin of Tours, the great extirpator of idolatry in Gaul, was comparatively easy, and his achievements by no means so much to be lamented, as those of the destroyers of the purer models of architecture in the East. The life of this saint, of which the comparatively polished and classical style singularly contrasts with the strange and legendary incident which it relates, describes St. Martin as making regular campaigns into all the region, destroying, wherever he could, the shrines and temples of the Heathen, and replacing them by churches and monasteries. So completely was his excited imagination full of his work, that he declared that Satan often assumed the visible form of Jove, of Mercury, of Venus, or of Minerva, to divert him, no doubt, from his holy design, and to protect their trembling fanes (3).

But the power and the majesty of Paganism were still concentrated at Rome; the deities of the ancient faith found their last refuge in the capital of the empire. To the stranger, Rome still offered the appearance of a Pagan city: it contained one hundred and fifty-two temples, and one hundred and eighty smaller chapels or shrines, still sacred to their tutelary God, and used for public worship (4). Christianity had neither ventured to usurp those few buildings which might be converted to her use, still less had she the power to destroy them. The religious edifices were under the protection of the præfect of the city, and the præfect was usually a Pagan; at all events, he would not permit any breach of the public peace, or violation of public property. Above all still towered the Capitol, in its unassailed and awful majesty, with its fifty temples or shrines, bearing the most sacred names in the religious and civil

Paganism  
at Rome.

(1) The Parthenon, it is well known, was entire, till towards the close of the sixteenth century. Its roof was destroyed during the siege by the Venetians. See Spon, and Wheler's Travels.

(2) The council of Illiberis refused the honours of martyrdom to those who were killed while breaking idols. Can. lx.

(3) Sulpic. Sever. Vit. B. Martini, p. 469.

(4) See the Descriptions Urbis, which bear

the names of Publius Victor, and Sextus Rufus Festus. These works could not have been written before or long after the reign of Valentinian. Compare Reugnot, Histoire de la Destruction du Paganisme en Occident. M. Reugnot has made out, on more or less satisfactory evidence, a list of the deities still worshipped in Italy. t. i. l. viii. c. 9. St. Augustin, when young, was present at the rites of Cybele, about A. D. 371.



annals of Rome, those of Jove, of Mars, of Janus, of Romulus, of Cæsar, of Victory. Some years after the accession of Theodosius to the Eastern empire, the sacrifices were still performed as national rites at the public cost; the pontiffs made their offerings in the name of the whole human race. The Pagan orator ventures to assert that the Emperor dared not to endanger the safety of the empire by their abolition (1). The Emperor still bore the title and insignia of the supreme Pontiff; the consuls before they entered upon their functions, ascended the Capitol; the religious processions passed along the crowded streets; and the people thronged to the festivals and theatres, which still formed part of the Pagan worship.

But the edifice had begun to tremble to its foundations. The Emperor had ceased to reside at Rome; his mind, as well that of Gratian, and the younger Valentinian, as of Theodosius, was free from those early inculcated and daily renewed impressions of the majesty of the ancient Paganism which still enthralled the minds of the Roman aristocracy. Of that aristocracy, the flower and the pride was Vettius Agorius Prætextatus (2). In him the wisdom of Pagan philosophy blended with the serious piety of Pagan religion: he lived to witness the commencement of the last fatal change, which he had no power to avert; he died, and his death was deplored as a public calamity, in time to escape the final extinction, or rather degradation, of Paganism. But eight years before the fatal accession of Gratian, and the year of his own death, he had publicly consecrated twelve statues, in the Capitol, with all becoming splendour, to the *Dii curantes*, the great guardian deities of Rome (3). It was not only the ancient religion of Rome which still maintained some part of its dignity, all the other religions of the empire, which still publicly celebrated their rites, and retained their temples in the metropolis, concentrated all their honours on Prætextatus, and took refuge, as it were, under the protection of his blameless and venerable name. His titles in an extant inscription announce him as having attained, besides the countless honours of Roman civil and religious dignity, the highest rank in the Eleusinian, Phrygian, Syrian, and Mithriac mysteries (4). His wife boasted the same religious titles; she was the priestess of the same mysteries, with the addition of some peculiar to the female sex (5). She celebrated the funeral, even the apotheosis, of her noble husband with the utmost pomp: he was the last Pagan, probably, who received the honours

Gratian  
Emperor,  
A. D. 367.  
Valentinian II.,  
A. D. 375.  
Theodosius,  
A. D. 379.

A. D. 376.

A. D. 384.

(1) Liban. pro Templis.

(2) See on Prætextatus, Macrob. Saturn. i. 2. Symmachi Epistolæ, i. 40. 43. 45., ii. 7. 34. 36. 53. 59. Hieronym. Epistolæ, xxiii.

(3) This appears from an inscription recently discovered (A. D. 1835), and published in the *Bulletino* of the Archaeological Society of Rome. Compare Bunsen, *Roms Beschreibung*, vol. iii. p. .

(4) Augur. Pontifex Vestæ, Pontifex Solis, Quindecimvir, Curialis Herculis, sacratus Libero et Eleusiniis, Hierophanta, Neocorus, Tauroboliat, Pater Patrum. Gruter, p. 1102. No. 2.

(5) Sacrata apud Eleusinam Deo Baccho, Cereri, et Coræ, apud Lernam, Deo Libero, et Cereri, et Coræ, sacrata apud Æginam Deabus; Taurobolite, Isiace, Hierophantie Deæ Hecataë, sacrata Deæ Cereris. Gruter, 309.

of deification. All Rome crowded, in sorrow and profound reverence, to the ceremony. In the language of the vehement Jerom there is a singular mixture of enforced respect and of aversion; he describes (to moralise at the awful change) the former triumphant ascent of the Capitol by Prætextatus amid the acclamations of the whole city; he admits the popularity of his life, but condemns him, without remorse, to eternal misery (1).

Up to the accession of Gratian, the Christian Emperor had assumed, as a matter of course, the supremacy over the religion, as well as the state, of Rome. He had been formally arrayed in the robes of the sovereign Pontiff. For the first few years of his reign, Gratian maintained the inaggressive policy of his father (2). But the masculine mind of Ambrose obtained, and indeed had deserved by his public services, the supremacy over the feeble youth; and his influence began to reveal itself in a succession of acts, which plainly showed that the fate of Paganism drew near. When Gratian was in Gaul, the senate of Rome remembered that he had not been officially arrayed in the dignity of the supreme Pontificate. A solemn deputation from Rome attended to perform the customary ceremonial. The idolatrous honour was disdainfully rejected. The event was heard in Rome with consternation; it was the first overt act of separation between the religious and the civil power of the empire (3). The next hostile measure was still more unexpected. Notwithstanding the manifest authority assumed by Christianity, and by one of the Christian prelates, best qualified, by his own determined character, to wield at his will the weak and irresolute Gratian; notwithstanding the long ill-suppressed murmurs, and now bold and authoritative remonstrances, against all toleration, all connivance at Heathen idolatry, it might have been thought that any other victim would have been chosen from the synod of Gods; that all other statues would have been thrown prostrate, all other worship proscribed, before that of Victory. Constantius, though he had calmly surveyed the other monuments of Roman superstition, admired their majesty, read the inscriptions over the porticos of the temples, had nevertheless given orders for the removal of this statue, and this alone,—its removal, it may be suspected not without some superstitious reverence, to the rival capital (4). Victory had been restored by Julian to the Senate-house at Rome, where

A. D. 367.

Augustus.

A. D. 378.

Gratian refuses the pontificate.

A. D. 382.

Statue of Victory.

(1) O quanta rerum mutatio! Ille quem ante paucos dies dignitatum omnium culmina præcedebant, qui quasi de subjectis hostibus triumpharet, Capitolinas ascendit arces; quem plausu quodam et tripudio populus Romanus exceperat, ad cuius intentum urbs universa commota est,—nunc desolatus et nudus, \*\*\* non in lacteo celi palatio ut uxor mentitur infelix, sed in sordentibus tenebris continetur. Hieronym. Epist. xxiii. vol. i. p. 135.

(2) M. Beugnot considers that Gratian was tolerant of Paganism from his accession, A. D.

367 to 382. He was sixteen when he ascended the throne, and became the first Augustus on the death of Valens, A. D. 378.

(3) Zosimus, iv. 36. The date of this transaction is conjectural. The opinion of La Bastie, *Mém. des Inscrip.* xv. 141., is followed.

(4) Constantius (the whole account of this transaction is vague and uncircumstantial), acting in the spirit of his father, who collected a great number of the best statues to adorn the new capital, perhaps intended to transplant Victory to Constantinople.

A. D. 323.

she had so long presided over the counsels of the conquering republic, and of the empire. She had maintained her place during the reign of Valentinian. The decree, that the statue of Victory was to be ignominiously dragged from its pedestal in the Senate-house, that the altar was to be removed, and the act of public worship, with which the Senate had for centuries of uninterrupted prosperity and glory commenced and hallowed its proceedings discontinued, fell, like a thunderbolt, among the partisans of the ancient worship. Surprise yielded to indignation. By the advice of Prætextatus, a solemn deputation was sent to remonstrate with the Emperor. The Christian party in the Senate were strong enough to forward, through the Bishop Damasus, a counter-petition, declaring their resolution to abstain from attendance in the Senate so long as it should be defiled by an idolatrous ceremonial. Gratian coldly dismissed the deputation, though headed by the eloquent Symmachus, as not representing the unanimous sentiments of the Senate (1).

This first open aggression on the Paganism of Rome was followed by a law which confiscated at once all the property of the temples, and swept away the privileges and immunities of the priesthood. The fate of the vestal virgins excited the strongest commiseration. They now passed unhonoured through the streets. The violence done to this institution, coeval with Rome itself, was aggravated by the bitter mockery of the Christians at the importance attached to those few and rare instances of chastity by the Pagans. They scoffed at the small number of the sacred virgins; at the occasional delinquencies (for it is singular that almost the last act of Pagan pontifical authority was the capital punishment of an unchaste vestal); the privilege they possessed, and sometimes claimed, of marriage, after a certain period of service, when, according to the severer Christians, such unholy desires should have been long extinct (2). If the state is to reward virginity (said the vehement Ambrose), the claims of the Christians would exhaust the treasury.

By this confiscation of the sacerdotal property, which had hitherto maintained the priesthood in opulence, the temples and the sacrificial rites in splendour, the Pagan hierarchy became stipendiaries of the state, the immediate step to their total dissolution. The public funds were still charged with a certain expenditure (3)

(1) It is very singular that, even at this very time, severe laws seem to have been necessary to punish apostates from Christianity. In 381, Theodosius deprived such persons of the right of bequeathing their property. Similar laws were passed in 383 and 391, against those qui ex Christianis Pagani facti sunt; qui ad Paganos ritus cultusque migrarunt; qui venerabili religione neglecta ad aras et templa transierint. Cod. Theodos. xvi. 7. 1, 2. 4. 5.

(2) Prudentius, though he wrote later, expresses this sentiment: —

Nubit anus veterana, sacro perfuncta labore,  
Desertisque foci, quibus est famulata juvenus,  
Transfert invitas ad fulcra jugalia rugas,  
Disceit et in gelido nova nupta calescere lecto

Adv. Symm. lib. II.

(3) This was called the Annona.



for the maintenance of the public ceremonies. This was not abrogated till after Theodosius had again united the whole empire under his conquering sway, and shared with Christianity the subjugated world.

In the interval, Heathenism made perhaps more than one desperate though feeble struggle for the ascendancy. Gratian was murdered in the year 383. Valentinian II. succeeded to the sole empire of the West. The celebrated Symmachus became præfect of Rome. Symmachus commanded the respect, and even deserved the common attachment, of all his countrymen (a rare example in those days) to interfere between the tyranny of the sovereign and the menaced welfare of the people. An uncorrupt magistrate, he deprecated the increasing burdens of unnecessary taxes, which weighed down the people; he dared to suggest that the eager petitions for office should be at once rejected, and the worthiest chosen out of the unpretending multitude. Symmachus inseparably connected, in his Pagan patriotism, the ancient religion with the welfare of Rome. He mourned in bitter humiliation over the acts of Gratian; the removal of the statue of Victory; the abrogation of the immunities of the Pagan priesthood: he hoped to obtain from the justice, or perhaps the fears, of the young Valentinian, that which had been refused by Gratian. The senate met under his authority; a petition was drawn up and presented in the name of that venerable body to the Emperor. In this composition Symmachus lavished all his eloquence. His oration is written with vigour, with dignity, with elegance. It is in this respect, perhaps, superior to the reply of Saint Ambrose (1). But in the feeble and apologetic tone, we perceive at once, that it is the artful defence of an almost hopeless cause; it is cautious to timidity; dexterous; elaborately conciliatory; moderate from fear of offending, rather than from tranquil dignity. Ambrose, on the other hand, writes with all the fervid and careless energy of one confident in his cause, and who knows that he is appealing to an audience already pledged by their own passions to his side; he has not to obviate objections, to reconcile difficulties, to sue or to propitiate; his contemptuous and criminating language has only to inflame zeal, to quicken resentment and scorn. He is flowing down on the full tide of human passion, and his impulse but accelerates and strengthens the rapid current.

Apology  
of Symmachus.

The personification of Rome, in the address of Symmachus, is a bold stroke of artificial rhetoric, but it is artificial; and Rome pleads

(1) Heyne has expressed himself strongly on the superiority of Symmachus. *Argumentorum delectu*, vi, pondere, aculeis, non minus admirabilis illa est quam prudentiâ, cautione, ac verendiâ; quam tanto magis sentias si verbosam et inanem, interdum calumniosam et veteratioriam

declamationem Ambrosii compares. *Censur. ingen. et mor. Q. A. Symmachi*, in Heyne *Opuscul.*

The relative position of the parties influenced, no doubt, the style, and will, perhaps, the judgment, of posterity on the merit of the compositions.

instead of commanding; intreats for indulgence, rather than menaces for neglect. "Most excellent Princes, Fathers of your country, respect my years, and permit me still to practise the religion of my ancestors, in which I have grown old. Grant me but the liberty of living according to my ancient usage. This religion has subdued the world to my dominion; these rites repelled Hannibal from my walls, the Gauls from the Capitol. Have I lived thus long, to be rebuked in my old age for my religion. It is too late; it would be discreditable to amend in my old age. I intreat but peace for the gods of Rome, the tutelary gods of our country." Rome condescends to that plea, which a prosperous religion neither uses nor admits, but to which a falling faith always clings with desperate energy. "Heaven is above us all; we cannot all follow the same path; there are many ways by which we arrive at the great secret. But we presume not to contend, we are humble suppliants!" The end of the third century had witnessed the persecutions of Dioclesian; the fourth had not elapsed when this is the language of Paganism, uttered in her strongest hold by the most earnest and eloquent of her partisans. Symmachus remonstrates against the miserable economy of saving the maintenance of the vestal virgins; the disgrace of enriching the imperial treasury by such gains; he protests against the confiscation of all legacies bequeathed to them by the piety of individuals. "Slaves may inherit; the vestal virgins alone, and the ministers of religion, are precluded from this common privilege." The orator concludes by appealing to the deified father of the Emperor, who looks down with sorrow from the starry citadel, to see that toleration violated which he had maintained with willing justice.

Reply of  
Ambrose.

But Ambrose was at hand to confront the eloquent Pagan, and to prohibit the fatal concession. Far different is the tone and manner of the Archbishop of Milan. He asserts, in plain terms, the unquestionable obligation of a Christian sovereign to permit no part of the public revenue to be devoted to the maintenance of idolatry. Their Roman ancestors were to be treated with reverence; but in a question of religion, they were to consider God alone. He who advises such grants as those demanded by the suppliants is guilty of sacrifice. Gradually he rises to still more imperious language, and unveils all the terrors of the sacerdotal authority. "The Emperor who shall be guilty of such concessions will find that the bishops will neither endure nor connive at his sin. If he enters a church, he will find no priest, or one who will defy his authority. The church will indignantly reject the gifts of him who has shared them with Gentile temples. The altar disdains the offerings of him who has made offerings to images. It is written, 'Man cannot serve two masters.'" Ambrose, emboldened, as it were, by his success, ventures in his second letter to treat the venerable and holy tradi-

tions of Roman glory with contempt. "How long did Hannibal insult the gods of Rome? It was the goose and not the deity that saved the Capitol. Did Jupiter speak in the goose? Where were the gods in all the defeats, some of them but recent, of the Pagan emperors? Was not the altar of Victory then standing?" He insults the number, the weaknesses, the marriages of the vestal virgins. "If the same munificence were shown to Christian virgins, the beggared treasury would be exhausted by the claims. Are not the baths, the porticos, the streets, still crowded with images? Must they still keep their place in the great council of the empire? You compel to worship, if you restore the altar. And who is this deity? Victory is a gift, and not a power; she depends on the courage of the legions, not on the influence of the religion,—a mighty deity, who is bestowed by the numbers of an army, or the doubtful issue of a battle!"

Foiled in argument, Paganism vainly grasped at other arms, which she had as little power to wield. On the murder of Valentinian, Arbogastes the Gaul, whose authority over the troops was without competitor, hesitated to assume the purple, which had never yet been polluted by a barbarian. He placed Eugenius, a rhetorician, on the throne. The elevation of Eugenius was an act of military violence; but the Pagans of the West hailed his accession with the most eager joy and the fondest hopes. The Christian writers denounce the apostasy of Eugenius not without justice, if Eugenius ever professed Christianity (1). Throughout Italy the temples were re-opened; the smoke of sacrifice ascended from all quarters; the entrails of victims were explored for the signs of victory. The frontiers were guarded by all the terrors of the old religion. The statue of Jupiter the Thunderer, sanctified by magic rites of the most awful significance, and placed on the fortifications amid the Julian Alps, looked defiance on the advance of the Christian Emperor. The images of the gods were unrolled on the banners, and Hercules was borne in triumph at the head of the army. Ambrose fled from Milan, for the soldiery boasted that they would stable their horses in the churches, and press the clergy to fill their legions.

Murder of  
Valentinian,  
A. D. 392.

Accession  
of Eugenius.

In Rome, Eugenius consented, without reluctance, to the restoration of the altar of Victory, but he had the wisdom to foresee the danger which his cause might incur, by the resumption of the temple estates, many of which had been granted away: he yielded with undisguised unwillingness to the irresistible importunities of Arbogastes and Flavianus.

While this reaction was taking place in the West, perhaps irritated by the intelligence of this formidable conspiracy of Paganism,

(1) Compare the letter of Ambrose to Eugenius. He addresses Eugenius apparently as a Christian, but one in the hands of more powerful Pagans.



with usurpation of the throne, Theodosius published in the East the last and most peremptory of those edicts which, gradually rising in the sternness of their language, proclaimed the ancient worship a treasonable and capital crime. In its minute and searching phrases it seemed eagerly to pursue Paganism to its most secret and private lurking-places. Thenceforth no man of any station, rank, or dignity, in any place in any city, was to offer an innocent victim in sacrifice; the more harmless worship of the household gods, which lingered, probably, more deeply in the hearts of the Pagans than any other part of their system, not merely by the smoke of victims, but by lamps, incense, and garlands, was equally forbidden. To sacrifice, or to consult the entrails of victims, was constituted high treason, and thereby a capital offence, although with no treasonable intention of calculating the days of the Emperor. It was a crime of sufficient magnitude, to infringe the laws of nature, to pry into the secrets of futurity, or to inquire concerning the death of any one. Whoever permitted any Heathen rite—hanging a tree with chaplets, or raised an altar of turf—forfeited the estate on which the offence was committed. Any house profaned with the smoke of incense was confiscated to the imperial exchequer. Whoever violated this prohibition, and offered sacrifice either in a public temple, or on the estate of another, was amerced in a fine of twenty-five pounds of gold (a thousand pounds of our money); and whoever connived at the offence was liable to the same fine: the magistrate who neglected to enforce it, to a still heavier penalty (1). This law, stern and intolerant as it was, spoke, no doubt, the dominant sentiment of the Christian world (2); but its repetition by the successors of Theodosius, and the employment of avowed Pagans in many of the high offices of the state and army, may permit us charitably to doubt whether the exchequer was much enriched by the forfeitures, or the sword of the executioner stained with the blood of conscientious Pagans. Polytheism boasted of no martyrs, and we may still hope that if called upon to carry its own decrees into effect, its native clemency—though, unhappily, Christian bigotry had already tasted of heretical blood—would have revolted from the sanguinary deed (3), and yet have seen the inconsistency of these acts (which it justified in theory, on the authority of the Old Testament), with the vital principles of the Gospel.

The victory of Theodosius in the West dissipated at once the vain hopes of Paganism; the pageant vanished away. Rome heard

(1) Cod. Theod. xvi. 10. 12.

(2) Gibbon has quoted from Le Clerc a fearful sentence of St. Augustine, addressed to the Donatists, "Quis nostrum, quis vestrum non laudat leges ab Imperatoribus datas adversus sacrificia Paganorum? Et certè longè ibi pœna severior constituta est; illius quippe impietatis capitale supplicium est." Epist. xciii. But passages

amiably inconsistent with this fierce tone might be quoted on the other side. Compare Editor's note on Gibbon, v. p. 114.

(3) Quis eorum comprehensus est in sacrificio (cum his legibus ista prohiberentur) et non negavit. Augustin, in Psalm cxx., quoted by Gibbon from Lardner.

of the triumph, perhaps witnessed the presence of the great conqueror, who, in the East, had already countenanced the most destructive attacks against the temples of the gods. The Christian poet describes a solemn debate of the Senate on the claims of Jupiter and of Christ to the adoration of the Roman people. According to his account, Jupiter was outvoted by a large number of suffrages; the decision was followed by a general desertion of their ancestral deities by the obsequious minority; the old hereditary names, the *Annii* and the *Probi*, the *Anicii* and *Olybii*, the *Paulini* and *Bassi*, the popular *Gracchi*, six hundred families, at once passed over to the Christian cause (1). The Pagan historian to a certain degree confirms the fact of the deliberate discussion, but differs as to the result. The senate, he states, firmly, but respectfully, adhered to their ancient deities (2). But the last argument of the Pagan advocates was fatal to their cause. *Theodosius* refused any longer to assign funds from the public revenue to maintain the charge of the idolatrous worship. The senate remonstrated, that if they ceased to be supported at the national cost, they would cease to be national rites. This argument was more likely to confirm than to shake the determination of the Christian Emperor. From this time the temples were deserted; the priests and priestesses, deprived of their maintenance, were scattered abroad. The public temples still stood, nor was it forbidden to worship within them, without sacrifice; the private, and family, or Gentile deities, still preserved their influence. *Theodosius* died the year after the defeat of *Eugenius*.

We pursue to its close the history of Western Paganism, which was buried at last in the ruins of the empire. *Gratian* had dis severed the supremacy of the national religion from the imperial dignity; he had confiscated the property of the temples; *Theodosius* had refused to defray the expense of public sacrifices from the public funds. Still, however, the outward form of Paganism remained. Some priesthoods were still handed down in regular descent; the rites of various deities, even of *Mithra* and *Cybele*, were celebrated without sacrifice, or with sacrifice, furtively performed; the corporation of the *aruspices* was not abolished. There still likewise remained a special provision for certain festivals and public amusements (3). The expense of the sacred banquets and of the games was defrayed by the state: an early law of *Honorius* respected the common enjoyments of the people (4).

A. D. 395.

The poem of *Prudentius* (5) acknowledges that the enactments

1 Sexcentos numerare domos de sanguine prisco  
Nobilium licet, ad Christi signacula versas.  
Turpis ab idoli vasto emeris se profundo.

Prud. ad Symmach.

(2) *Zosim.* Hist. iv. 59.

(3) It was called the *vestigal templorum*.

(4) *Communis populi lætitia*.

(5) The poem of *Prudentius* is by no means a recapitulation of the arguments of *St. Ambrose*; it is original, and in some parts very vigorous.

*Prudentius* has probably amplified some considerable desertion of the wavering and dubious believers.

of Theodosius had been far from altogether successful (1); his bold assertion of the universal adoption of Christianity by the whole senate is in some degree contradicted by his admission that the old pestilence of idolatry had again broken out in Rome (2). It implies that the restoration of the statue of Victory had again been urged, and by the indefatigable Symmachus, on the sons Theodosius (3). The poem was written after the battle of Pollentia, as it triumphantly appeals to the glories of that day, against the argument that Rome was indebted for the victories of former times to her ancient gods. It closes with an earnest admonition to the son of Theodosius to fulfil the task which was designedly left him by the piety of his father (4), to suppress at once the vestal virgins, and, above all, the gladiatorial shows, which they were accustomed to countenance by their presence.

A. D. 403.

Law of  
Honorius.

In the year 408 came forth the edict which aimed at the direct and complete abolition of Paganism throughout the Western empire. The whole of this reserved provision for festivals was swept away; it was devoted to the more useful purpose, the pay of the loyal soldiery (5). The same edict proceeded to actual violence, to invade and take possession of the sanctuaries of religion. All images were to be thrown down; the edifices, now useless and deserted, to be occupied by the imperial officers, and appropriated to useful purposes (6). The government, wavering between demolition and desecration, devised this plan for the preservation of these great ornaments of the cities, which thus, taken under the protection of the magistracy as public property, were secured from the destructive zeal of the more fanatical Christians. All sacrilegious rites, festivals, and ceremonies were prohibited. The bishops of the towns were invested with power to suppress these forbidden usages, and the civil authorities, as though the government mistrusted their zeal, were bound, under a heavy penalty, to obey the summons, and to assist the prelates in the extirpation of idolatry. Another edict excluded all enemies of the Christian faith from the great public offices in the state and in the army, and this, if fully carried into effect, would have transferred the whole power throughout the empire into the hands of the Christians. But the times were not yet

(1) *Inclitus ergo parens patriæ, moderator et orbis,  
Nil egit prohibendo, vagas ne pristinus error  
Crederet esse Deum nigrante sub aere formas.*

(2) *Sed quoniam renovata lues turbare salutem  
Tentat Romulidum.*

(3) *Armorum dominos, vernantes flore juventæ,  
Inter castra patris genitos, sub imagine avitæ  
Eductos, exempla domi congesta tenentes,  
Orator catus instigat.  
Si vobis vel parta, viri, victoria cordi est,  
Vel parienda dehinc, templum Dea virgo sacratum  
Obtineat, vobis regnantibus.*

The orator catus, is Symmachus; the parta victoria, that of Pollentia; the Dea virgo, Victory.

(4) *Quam tibi supplendam Deus, et genitoris amica  
Servavit pietas: solus ne præmia tantæ  
Virtutis caperet "partem, tibi, nate reservo,"  
Dixit, et integrum decus intactumque reliquit.*  
Sub fin.

(5) *Expensis devotissimorum militum profutura.*

(6) Augustine (though not entirely consistent) disapproved of the forcible demolition of the temples. "Let us first extirpate the idolatry of the hearts of the Heathen, and they will either themselves invite us, or anticipate us in the execution of this good work." *Tom. v. p. 62.*



ripe for this measure. Generides, a Pagan, in a high command in the army, threw up his commission. The edict was repealed (1).

Rome once more beheld the shadow of a Pagan Emperor, Attalus, while the Christian Emperor maintained his court at Ravenna; and both stood trembling before the victorious Alaric. When that triumphant Goth formed the siege of Rome, Paganism, as if grateful for the fidelity of the imperial city, made one last desperate effort to avert the common ruin. Pagan magic was the last refuge of conscious weakness. The Etrurian soothsayers were called forth from their obscurity, with the concurrence of the whole city (the Pope himself is said to have assented to the idolatrous ceremony), to blast the barbaric invader with the lightnings of Jupiter. The Christian historian saves the credit of his party, by asserting that they kept away from the profane rite (2). But it may be doubted, after all, whether the ceremony really took place; both parties had more confidence in the power of a large sum of money, offered to arrest the career of the triumphant barbarian.

The impartial fury of Alaric fell alike on church and temple, on Christian and Pagan. But the capture of Rome consummated the ruin of Paganism. The temples, indeed, were for the most part left standing, but their worshippers had fled. The Roman aristocracy, in whom alone Paganism still retained its most powerful adherents, abandoned the city, and, scattered in the provinces of the empire, were absorbed in the rapidly Christianising population. The deserted buildings had now neither public authority nor private zeal and munificence to maintain them against the encroachments of time or accident, to support the tottering roof, or repair the broken column. There was neither public fund, nor private contribution, for their preservation, till at length the Christians, in many instances, took possession of the abandoned edifice, converted it to

Capture of  
Rome by  
Alaric.

(1) Prudentius ventures to admire the tolerant impartiality of Theodosius, in admitting both parties alike to civil and military honours. He urges this argumentum ad hominem against Symmachus: —

Denique pro meritis terrestribus æqua rependens  
Munera, sacricolis summos impertit honores  
Dux bonus, et certare sinit cum laude suorum.  
Nec pago implicitos per debita culmina mundi  
Ire vetat.  
Ipse magistratum tibi consulis, ipe tribunal  
Contulit.

In the East, the Pagan Themistius had been appointed præfect of Constantinople by Theodosius. It is curious to read his flatteries of the orthodox Christian Emperor; he praises his love of philosophy in the most fervent language.

The most remarkable instance of this inconsistency, at a much later period, occurs in the person of Merobaudes, a general and a poet, who flourished in the first half of the fifth century. A statue in honour of Merobaudes was placed in the Forum of Trajan, of which the inscription is still extant. Fragments of his poems have been

discovered by the industry and sagacity of Niebuhr. In one passage, Merobaudes, in the genuine Heathen spirit, attributes the ruin of the empire to the abolition of Paganism, and almost renews the old accusation of Atheism against Christianity. He impersonates some deity, probably Discord, who summons Bellona to take arms for the destruction of Rome; and, in a strain of fierce irony, recommends to her, among other fatal measures, to extirpate the gods of Rome:

Roma, ipsique tremant furialia murmura reges.  
Jam superos terribis, atque hospita numina pelle:  
*Romanos populare Deos, et nullus in aris*  
Vestæ exorata, fatus strue, palleat ignis.  
His instructa dolis palatia celsa subibo,  
Majorum mores, et pectora prisca fugabo  
Funditus, atque simul, nullo discrimine rerum,  
Spernantur fortes, nec sit reverentia justis.  
Attica neglecto pereat facundia Phæbo,  
*Indignis contingat honos, et pondera rerum.*  
Non virtus sed casus agat, tristisque cupido;  
Pectoribus sævi demens furor æstuet ævi;  
*Omniaque hæc sine mente Jovis, sine numine summo.*  
Merobaudes in Niebuhr's edit. of the Byzantines.

(2) Zosimus, v. Sozomen, ix. 6.

their own use, and hallowed it by a new consecration (1). Thus, in many places, though marred and disfigured, the monuments of architecture survived, with no great violation of the ground plan, distribution, or general proportions (2).

Paganism was, in fact, left to die out by gradual dissolution (3). The worship of the Heathen deities lingered in many temples, till it was superseded by the new form of Christianity, which, at least in its outward appearance, approximated to Polytheism: the Virgin gradually supplanted many of the local deities. In Sicily, which long remained obstinately wedded to the ancient faith, eight celebrated temples were dedicated to the Mother of God (4). It was not till the seventh century, that the Pantheon was dedicated by Pope Boniface IV. to the Holy Virgin. Of the public festivals, the last which clung with tenacious grasp to the habits of the Roman people, was the Lupercalia. It was suppressed towards the close of the fifth century by Pope Gelasius. The rural districts were not completely Christianised until the general introduction of monasticism. Heathenism was still prevalent in many parts of Italy, especially in the neighbourhood of Turin, in the middle of the fifth century (5). It was the missionary from the convent who wandered through the villages, or who, from his monastery, regularly discharged the duties of a village pastor. St. Benedict of Nursia destroyed the worship of Apollo on Mount Casino.

Every where the superstition survived the religion, and that which was unlawful under Paganism, continued to be unlawfully practised under Christianity. The insatiable propensity of men to inquire into futurity, and to deal with secret and invisible agencies, which reason condemns, and often while it condemns, consults, retained its old formularies, some pretending to be magical or theurgic. Divination and witchcraft have never been extinct in Italy, or, perhaps, in any part of Europe. The descendants of Canidia or Erichtho, the seer and the magician, have still practised their arts, to which the ignorant, including at times all mankind, have listened with unabated credulity.

We must resume our consideration of Paganising Christianity, as the parent of Christian art and poetry, and, in fact, the ruler of the human mind for many ages.

(1) There are many churches in Rome, which, like the Pantheon, are ancient temples; thirty-nine built on the foundations of temples. Four retain Pagan names. S. Maria sopra Minerva, S. Maria Aventina, S. Lorenzo in Matuta, S. Stefano in Cacco. At Sienna, the temple of Quirinus became the church of S. Quirino. Beugnot, ii. p. 266. See in Bingham, book viii. s. 4., references to several churches in the East, converted into temples. But this passage must be read with caution.

(2) In some cases, by a more destructive ap-

propriation, they converted the materials to their own use, and worked them up into their own barbarous churches.

(3) The fifth council of Carthage (A. D. 398.), can. xv., petitioned the most glorious Emperors to destroy the remains of idolatry, not merely "in simulacris," but in other places, groves, and trees.

(4) Beugnot, ii. 271.; from Aprile, *Chronologia Universale de Sicilia*.

(5) See the sermons of Maximus, bishop of Turin, quoted in Beugnot, ii. 253.

## CHAPTER IX.

THEODOSIUS. TRIUMPH OF TRINITARIANISM. THE GREAT PRELATES OF THE EAST.

BUT the unity, no less than the triumph, of Christianity occupied the vigorous mind of Theodosius. He had been anticipated in this design in the West by his feeble predecessors and colleagues, Gratian and Valentinian the younger. The laws began to speak the language of the exclusive establishment of Christianity, and of Christianity under one rigorous and unaccommodating creed and discipline. Almost the first of Theodosius was the edict for the universal acceptance of the Catholic faith (1). It appeared under the name, and with the conjoint authority of the three Emperors, Gratian, Valentinian II., and Theodosius. It was addressed to the inhabitants of Constantinople. "We, the three Emperors, *will* that all our subjects follow the religion taught by St. Peter to the Romans, professed by those saintly prelates, Damasus Pontiff of Rome, and Peter Bishop of Alexandria, that we believe the one divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of majesty coequal, in the Holy Trinity. We *will* that those who embrace this creed be called Catholic Christians; we brand all the senseless followers of other religions by the infamous name of heretics, and forbid their conventicles to assume the name of churches; we reserve their punishment to the vengeance of heaven, and to such measures as divine inspiration shall dictate to us (2)." Thus the religion of the whole Roman world was enacted by two feeble boys, and a rude Spanish soldier (3). The next year witnessed the condemnation of all heretics, particularly the Photinians, Arians, and Eunomians, and the expulsion of the Arians from the churches of all the cities in the East (4), and their surrender to the only *lawful* form of Christianity. On the assembling of the council of Chalcedon, two severe laws were issued against Apostates and Manicheans, prohibiting them from making wills. During its sitting, the Emperor promulgated an edict, prohibiting the Arians from building churches either in the cities or in the country, under pain of the confiscation of the funds devoted to the purpose (5).

The circumstances of the times happily coincided with the design of Theodosius to concentrate the whole Christian world into one vi-

Orthodoxy  
of Theodo-  
sius.

Laws  
against  
heretics.  
A. D. 380.

All the  
more  
powerful  
ecclesiastical  
writers  
favourable  
to Trini-  
tarianism.

(1) Codex Theodos. xvi. 1, 2.

(2) Post etiam motus nostri, quem ex cœlesti arbitrio sumpserimus, ultione plectendos. Godefroy supposes these words not to mean "cœleste oraculum," but, "Dei arbitrium, regulam et formulam juris divini."

(3) Baronius, and even Godefroy, call this law a golden, pious, and wholesome statute. Happily it was on the right side.

(4) On the accession of Theodosius, according to Sozomen, the Arians possessed all the churches of the East, except Jerusalem. H. E. vii. 2

(5) Sozomen mentions these severe laws, but asserts that they were enacted merely in terror, and with no design of carrying them into execution. H. E. vii. 12.



gorous and consistent system. The more legitimate influence of argument and intellectual and religious superiority concurred with the stern mandates of the civil power. All the great and commanding minds of the age were on the same side, as to the momentous and strongly agitated questions of the faith. The productive energies of Arianism seemed, as it were, exhausted ; its great defenders had passed away, and left, apparently, no heirs to their virtues or abilities. It was distracted with schisms, and had to bear the unpopularity of the sects, which seemed to have sprung from it in the natural course, the Eunomians, Macedonians, and a still multiplying progeny of heresies. Every where the Trinitarian prelates arose to ascendancy, not merely from the support of the government, but from their pre-eminent character or intellectual powers. Each province seemed to have produced some individual adapted to the particular period and circumstances of the time, who devoted himself to the establishment of the Athanasian opinions. The intractable Egypt, more particularly turbulent Alexandria, was ruled by the strong arm of the bold and unprincipled Theophilus. The dreamy mysticism of Syria found a congenial representative in Ephrem. A more intellectual, yet still somewhat imaginative, Orientalism animates the writings of St. Basil ; in a less degree, those of Gregory Nazianzum ; still less, those of Gregory Nyssa. The more powerful and Grecian eloquence of Chrysostom swayed the popular mind in Constantinople. Jerom, a link, as it were, between the East and the West, transplanted the monastic spirit and opinions of Syria into Rome ; and brought into the East much of the severer thought, and more prosaic reasoning, of the Latin world. In Gaul, where Hilary of Poitiers had long maintained the cause of Trinitarianism, on the borders of civilisation, St. Martin of Tours acted the part of a bold and enterprising missionary ; while in Milan, the court capital of the West, the strong practical character of Ambrose, his sternly conscientious moral energy, though hardening at times into rigid intolerance, with the masculine strength of his style, confirmed the Latin church in that creed, to which Rome had adhered with almost unshaken fidelity. If not the greatest, the most permanently influential of all, Augustine, united the intense passion of the African mind with the most comprehensive and systematic views, and intrepid dogmatism on the darkest subjects. United in one common cause, acting in their several quarters according to their peculiar temperaments and characters, these strong-minded and influential ecclesiastics almost compelled the world into a temporary peace, till first Pelegianism, and afterwards Nestorianism, unsettled again the restless elements ; the controversies, first concerning grace, free-will, and predestination, then on the incarnation and two natures of Christ, succeeded to the silenced and exhausted feud concerning the trinity of persons in the Godhead.

Theophilus of Alexandria (1) performed his part in the complete subjection of the world, by his energy as a ruler, not by the slower and more legitimate influence of moral persuasion through his preaching or his writings (2). He suppressed Arianism by the same violent and coercive means with which he extirpated Paganism. The tone of this prelate's epistles is invariably harsh and criminal. He appears in the best light as opposing the vulgar anthropomorphism of the monks in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, and insisting on the pure spiritual nature of the Deity. Yet he condescended to appease these turbulent adversaries by an unmanly artifice. He consented to condemn the doctrines of Origen, who, having reposed quietly in his tomb for many years, in general respect, if not in the odour of sanctity, was exhumed, as it were, by the zeal of later times, as a dangerous heresiarch. The Oriental doctrines with which Origen had impregnated his system were unpopular, and perhaps not clearly understood (3). The notion that the reign of Christ was finite was rather an inference from his writings, than a tenet of Origen. For if all bodies were to be finally annihilated (according to his anti-materialist system), the humanity of Christ, and consequently his personal reign, must cease. The possibility that the devil might, after long purification, be saved, and the corruptibility of the body after the resurrection, grew out of the same Oriental cast of opinions. But the perfectly pure and immaterial nature of the Deity was the tenet of Origen which was the most odious to the monks; and Theophilus, by anathematising Origenism in the mass, while he himself held certainly the sublimest, but to his adversaries most objectionable part of the system, adopted a low and undignified deception. The persecution of Isidore, and the heads of the monasteries who befriended his cause (the tall brethren, as they were called), from personal motives of animosity, display the Alexandrian prelate in his ordinary character. We shall again encounter Theophilus in the lamentable intrigues against the advancement and influence of Chrysostom.

Theophilus of Alexandria, bishop, from 385 to 412.

The character of Ephrem (4), the Syrian, was the exact counterpart to that of the busy and worldly Theophilus. A native of Nisibis, or rather of its neighbourhood, Ephrem passed the greater part of his life at Edessa, and in the monastic establishments which began to abound in Mesopotamia and Syria, as in Egypt. His genius was that of the people in whose language he wrote his numerous compositions in prose and verse (5). In Ephrem something

S. Ephrem, the Syrian, died 379.

(1) I have not placed these writers in their strict chronological order, but according to the countries in which they lived.

(2) The Trinitarian doctrines had been maintained in Alexandria by the virtues and abilities of Didymus the Blind.

(3) Socrates, vi. 10. Sozomen, viii. 13.

(4) See the Life of Ephrem prefixed to his works; and in Tillemont.

(5) According to Theodoret, he was unacquainted with Greek: Παιδείας γὰρ οὐ γεγευμένος ἑλληνικῆς, τοὺς τε πολυσχιδεῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων διήλεξε πλάτους, καὶ πάσης αἰρετικῆς κακοτεχνίας ἐγύμνασε τὴν ἀσθίνειαν. The refutation of Greek heresy in Syriac must have been curious.

of the poetic mysticism of the Gnostic was allied with the most rigid orthodoxy of doctrine. But with his imaginative turn were mingled a depth and intensity of feeling, which gave him his peculiar influence over the kindred minds of his countrymen. Tears were as natural to him as perspiration; day and night, in his devout seclusion, he wept for the sins of mankind and for his own; his very writings, it was said, weep; there is a deep and latent sorrow even in his panegyrics or festival homilies (1).

Ephrem was a poet, and his hymns, poured forth in the prodigality of his zeal, succeeded at length in entirely disenchanting the popular ear from the heretical strains of Bardesanes, and his son Harmonius, which lingered after the general decay of Gnosticism (2). The hymns of Ephrem were sung on the festivals of the martyrs. His psalms, the constant occupation which he enjoins upon his monkish companions, were always of a sorrowful and contrite tone. Laughter was the source and the indication of all wickedness, sorrow of all virtue. During the melancholy psalm, God was present with his angels, all more joyous strains belonged to heathenism and idolatry.

The monasticism as well as the Trinitarianism of Syria, received a strong impulse from Ephrem, and in Syria monasticism began to run into its utmost extravagance. There was one class of ascetics who, at certain periods, forsook their cities, and retired to the mountains to browse on the herbage which they found, as their only food. The writings of Ephrem were the occupation and delight of all these gentle and irreproachable fanatics; and, as Ephrem was rigidly Trinitarian, he contributed to fix the doctrinal language of the various cœnobitic institutions and solitary hermitages. In fact, the quiescent intellect probably rejoiced in being relieved from these severe and ungrateful enquiries: and full freedom being left to the imagination, and ample scope to the language, in the vague and fervent expressions of divine love, the Syrian mind felt not the restriction of the rigorous creed, and passively surrendered itself to ecclesiastical authority. Absorbed in its painful and melancholy struggles with the internal passions and appetites, it desired not to provoke, but rather to repress, the dangerous activity of the reason. The orthodoxy of Ephrem himself savours perhaps of timidity and the disinclination to agitate such awful and appalling questions. He would elude and escape them, and abandon himself altogether to the more edifying emotions which it is the chief object of his writings to excite and maintain. The dreamer must awake in order to reason, and he prefers the passive tranquillity of the half-waking state.

(1) See the two treatises in his works, vol. i. 104-107. *Non esse ridendum sed lugendum*

*potius atque plorandum; and, Quod ludicris rebus abstinendum sit Christianis.*

(2) Theodoret, iv. 29.



Greece, properly so called, contributed none of the more distinguished names in Eastern Christianity. Even the Grecian part of Asia Minor was by no means fertile in names which survive in the annals of the Church. In Athens philosophy still lingered, and struggled to maintain its predominance. Many of the more eminent ecclesiastics had visited its schools in their youth, to obtain those lessons of rhetoric and profane knowledge which they were hereafter to dedicate to their own sacred uses. But they were foreigners, and, in the old language of Greece, would have been called barbarians.

The rude and uncivilised Cappadocia gave birth to Basil and the two Gregories. The whole of the less dreamy, and still active and commercial, part of Asia was influenced by Basil, on whose character and writings his own age lavished the most unbounded praise. The name of Basil is constantly united with those of the two Gregories. One, Gregory of Nyssa, was his brother; the other, named from his native town of Nazianzum, of which his father was bishop, was the intimate friend of his boyhood and of his later years. The language, the eloquence, the opinions of these writers retain, in different degrees, some tinge of Asiatic colouring. Far more intelligible and practical than the mystic strains and passionate homilies of Ephrem, they delight in agitating, though in a more modest spirit, the questions which had inflamed the imagination of the Gnostics. But with them, likewise, enquiry proceeds with cautious and reverent steps. On these subjects they are rigorously orthodox, and assert the exclusive doctrines of Athanasius with the most distinct and uncompromising energy. Basil maintained the cause of Trinitarianism with unshaken fidelity during its days of depression and adversity. His friend Gregory of Nazianzum lived to witness and bear a great part in its triumph. Both Basil and Gregory were ardent admirers, and in themselves transcendent models of the more monastic Christianity. The influence of Basil crowded that part of Asia with cœnobitic institutions: but in his monasteries labour and useful industry prevailed to a greater extent than in the Syrian deserts,

Cappadocia,

Basil was a native of the Cappadocian Cæsarea (1). He was an hereditary Christian. His grandfather had retired during the Dioclesian persecution to a mountain forest in Pontus. His father was a man of estimation as a lawyer, possessed considerable property, and was remarkable for his personal beauty. His mother, in person and character, was worthy of her husband. The son of such parents received the best education which could be bestowed on a Christian youth. Having exhausted the instruction to be obtained in his native city of Cæsarea, he went to Constantinople, where he

S. Basil,

(1) Life of Basil, prefixed to his works. and Tillemont, Vie de S. Basile.

is reputed to have studied the art of rhetoric under the celebrated Libanius. But Athens was still the centre of liberal education, and, with other promising youths from the Eastern provinces, Basil and his friend Gregory resided for some time in that city. But with all his taste for letters and eloquence (and Basil always spoke even of profane learning with generous respect, far different from the tone of contempt and animosity expressed by some writers), Christianity was too deeply rooted in his heart to be endangered either by the studies or the society of Athens. On his return to Cæsarea, he embraced the ascetic faith of the times with more than ordinary fervour. He abandoned his property, he practised such severe austerities as to injure his health, and to reduce his bodily form to the extreme of meagreness and weakness. He was “without wife, without property, without flesh, almost without blood.” He fled into the desert; his fame collected, as it were, a city around him; he built a monastery, and monasteries sprang up on every side. Yet the opinions of Basil concerning the monastic life were far more moderate and practical than the wilder and more dreamy asceticism which prevailed in Egypt and in Syria. He admired and persuaded his followers to cœnobitic, not to eremitical, life. It was the life of the industrious religious community, not of the indolent and solitary anchorite, which to Basil was the perfection of Christianity. All ties of kindred were indeed to give place to that of spiritual association. He that loves a brother in blood more than a brother in the religious community is still a slave to his carnal nature (1). The indiscriminate charity of these institutions, was to receive orphans of all classes for education and maintenance, but other children only with the consent, or at the request of parents, certified before witnesses; and vows of virginity were by no means to be enforced upon these youthful pupils (2). Slaves who fled to the monasteries were to be admonished, and sent back to their owners. There is one reservation, that slaves were not bound to obey their master, if he should order what is contrary to the laws of God (3). Industry was to be the animating principle of these settlements. Prayer and psalmody were to have their appointed hours; but by no means to intrude upon those devoted to useful labour. These labours were strictly defined, such as were of real use to the community, not those which might contribute to vice or luxury. Agriculture was especially recommended. The life was in no respect to be absorbed in a perpetual mystic communion with the Deity.

A. D. 366.  
See ch.  
viii.  
p. 168.

A. D. 370.

Basil lived in his monastic retirement during a great part of the triumphant period of Arianism in the East; but during the reign of Valens, he was recalled to Cæsarea, to be the champion of Trinitarianism against the Emperor and his Arian partisans. The firm-

(1) Basil. Opera, ii. 325. Sermo Asceticus.  
(2) Basil, Opera, ii. 355.

(3) Basil. Opera, ii. 357.

ness of Basil, as we have seen, commanded the respect even of his adversaries. In the midst of the raging controversy, he was raised to the archiepiscopal throne of Cæsarea. He governed the see with activity and diligence : not only the influence of his writings, but his actual authority (his pious ambition of usefulness induced him perhaps to overstep the limits of his diocese) extended beyond Cappadocia, into Armenia and parts of Asia Minor. He was the firm supporter of the Nicene Trinitarianism, but did not live to behold its final triumph. His decease followed immediately upon the defeat and death of Valens. A. D. 379.

The style of Basil did no discredit to his Athenian education ; in purity and perspicuity he surpasses most of the Heathen, as well as the Christian writers of his age.

Gregory of Nazianzum, as he shared the friendship so he has constantly participated in the fame of Basil. He was born in a village, Arianza, within the district of Nazianzum, his father was bishop of that city (1). With Basil he passed a part of his youth at Athens, and predicted, according to his own account, the apostasy of Julian, from the observation of his character, and even of his person. Gregory is his own biographer ; one or rather two poems, the first consisting of above two thousand iambics, the second of hexameters, describe the whole course of his early life. But Grecian poetry was not to be awakened from its long slumber by the voice of a Christian poet. It was faithful to its ancient source of inspiration. Christian thoughts and images will not blend with the language of Homer and the tragedians. Yet the autobiographical poems of Gregory illustrate a remarkable peculiarity which distinguishes modern and Christian from the older, more particularly the Grecian, poetry. In the Grecian poetry, as in Grecian life the public absorbed the individual character. The person of the poet rarely appears, unless occasionally as the poet, as the objective author or reciter, not as the subject of the poem. The Elegiac poets of Greece, if we may judge from the few surviving fragments, and the amatory writers of Rome, speak in their proper persons, utter their individual thoughts, and embody their peculiar feelings. In the shrewd common life view of Horace, and, indeed in some of his higher lyric poetry, the poet is more prominent ; and the fate of Ovid, one day basking in the imperial favour, the next, for some mysterious offence, banished to the bleak shores of the Euxine, seemed to give him the privilege of dwelling upon his own sorrows ; his strange fate invested his life in peculiar interest. But by the Christian scheme, the individual man has assumed a higher importance ; his actions, his opinions, the emotions of his mind, as

Gregory  
of Nazian-  
zum.

His poems

Character-  
istic dif-  
ference  
between  
Greek and  
Christian  
poetry.

(1) Tillemont is grievously embarrassed by the time of Gregory's birth. The stubborn dates insist upon his having been born after his father

had attained the episcopate. He is forced to acknowledge the laxity of ecclesiastical discipline on this head, at this period of the church.



Value of  
Gregory's.

connected with his immortal state, have acquired a new and commanding interest, not only to himself but to others. The poet profoundly scrutinises, and elaborately reveals, the depths of his moral being. The psychological history of the man, in all its minute particulars, becomes the predominant matter of the poem. In this respect, these autobiographical poems of Gregory, loose as they are in numbers, and spun out with a wearisome and garrulous mediocrity; and wanting that depth and passion of religion which has made the Confessions of Augustine one of the most permanently popular of Christian writings, possess nevertheless some interest, as indicating the transition state in poetry, as well as illustrating the thought and feeling prevalent among the Christian youth of the period. The one great absorbing question was the comparative excellence of the secular and the monastic life, the state of marriage or of virginity. The enthusiasm of the East scarcely deigned to submit this point to discussion. In one of Gregory's poems, Marriage and Virginity each plead their cause; but there can be no doubt, from the first, to which will be assigned the victory. The Saviour gives to Virginity the place of honour on his right hand. Gregory had never entangled himself with marriage, that fatal tie which enthralls the soul in the bonds of matter. For him silken robes, gorgeous banquets, splendid palaces, music and perfumes, had no charm. He disregarded wealth, and feasted contentedly on bread with a little salt, and water for his only drink. The desire of supporting the declining age of his parents thwarted his holy ambition of withdrawing from all worldly intercourse: but this became a snare. He was embarrassed by refractory servants, by public and private business. The death of his brother involved him still more inextricably in affairs, arising out of his contested property. But the faithless friendship of Basil, which he deplores in the one touching passage of his whole poem (1), still further endangered his peace.

Gregory,  
bishop of  
Sasima.  
A. D. 372.

In the zeal of Basil to fill the bishoprics of his metropolitan diocese, calculating perhaps that Gregory, like himself, would generously sacrifice the luxury of religious quietude for the more useful duties of a difficult active position, he imposed upon his reluctant friend the charge of the newly created see of Sasima. This was a small and miserable town, at the meeting of three roads, in a country at once arid, marshy, and unwholesome, noisy and dusty from the constant passage of travellers, the disputes with extortionate custom-house officers, and all the tumult and drunkenness belonging to a town inhabited by loose and passing strangers.

(1) Gibbon's selection of this passage, and his happy illustration from Shakespeare, do great credit to his poetical taste:

Πᾶνοι κοῖνοι λόγων  
Ὁμόσπρεός τε, καὶ συνέσπιος ἑλίας.  
Νοῦς τίς ἐν ἀμφοῖν \* \* \* \*

Διεσκέδασται πάντα, καρρῖπται χαμαί,  
Αὔραι φέρουσι τὰς παλαιὰς ἑλτιδας.

Is all the counsel that we two have shared,  
The sisters' vows, etc. Helena, in the Mid-summer Night's Dream. See Gibbon, c. xxvii. vol. v p. 18.

With Basil, Gregory had passed the tranquil days of his youth, the contemplative period of his manhood; together they had studied at Athens, together they had twice retired to monastic solitude; and this was the return for his long and tried attachment! Gregory, in the bitterness of his remonstrance, at one time assumes the language of an Indian saquir. Instead of rejoicing in the sphere opened to his activity, he boldly asserts his supreme felicity to be total inaction (1). He submitted with the strongest repugnance to the office, and abandoned it, almost immediately, on the first opposition. He afterwards administered the see of Nazianzum under his father, and even after his father's decease, without assuming the episcopal title.

But Gregory was soon compelled by his own fame for eloquence and for orthodoxy to move in a more arduous and tumultuous sphere. For forty years Arianism had been dominant in Constantinople. The Arians mocked at the small number which still lingered in the single religious assemblage of the Athanasian party (2). Gregory is constrained to admit this humiliating fact, and indignantly inquires, whether the sands are more precious than the stars of heaven, or the pebbles than pearls, because they are more numerous (3)? But the accession of Theodosius opened a new æra to the Trinitarians. The religion of the Emperor would no longer condescend to this humble and secondary station. Gregory was invited to take charge of the small community which was still faithful to the doctrines of Athanasius. Gregory was already bowed with age and infirmity; his bald head stooped to his bosom; his countenance was worn by his austerities and his inward spiritual conflicts, when he reluctantly sacrificed his peace for this great purpose (4). The Catholics had no church; they met in a small house, on the site of which afterwards arose the celebrated church of St. Anastasia. The eloquence of Gregory wrought wonders in the busy and versatile capital. The Arians themselves crowded to hear him. His adversaries were reduced to violence: the Anastasia was attacked; the Arian monks, and even the virgins, mingled in the furious fray: many lives were lost, and Gregory was accused as the cause of the tumult. His innocence, and the known favour of the Emperor, secured his acquittal; his eloquence was seconded by the imperial edicts. The law had been promulgated which denounced as heretics all who rejected the Nicene Creed.

The influence of Gregory was thwarted, and his peace disturbed, by the strange intrigues of one Maximus to possess himself of the episcopal throne of Constantinople. Maximus was called the Cynic, from his attempt to blend the rude manners, the coarse white dress,

Gregory,  
bishop of  
Constanti-  
nople.  
From A. D.  
339 to  
379.

(1) Ἐμοὶ δὲ μεγίστη πρᾶξις ἔστιν ἡ ἀπραξία. Epist. xxxiii. p. 797.

(2) In the reign of Valentinian, they met  
iv μικρῇ οἰκίᾳ. Socrates, iv. 1.

(3) Orat. xxv. p. 431.

(4) Tillemont, art. xlvii.

his enemies added, the vices, of that sect, with the profession of Christianity. His memory is loaded with every kind of infamy ; yet by dexterous flattery and assiduous attendance on the sermons of Gregory, he had stolen into his unsuspecting confidence, and received his public commendations in a studied oration (1). Constantinople and Gregory himself were suddenly amazed with the intelligence that Maximus had been consecrated the Catholic bishop of the city. This extraordinary measure had been taken by seven Alexandrians of low birth and character (2), with some bishops deputed by Peter the orthodox Archbishop of Alexandria (3). A number of mariners, probably belonging to the corn fleet, had assisted at the ceremony and raised the customary acclamations. A great tumult of all orders arose ; all rushed to the church, from which Maximus and his party withdrew, and hastily completed a kind of tonsure ( for the cynic prided himself on his long hair ) in the private dwelling of a flute-player. Maximus seems to have been rejected with indignation by the Athanasians of Constantinople, who adhered with unshaken fidelity to Gregory ; he fled to the court of Theodosius, but the earliest measure adopted by the Emperor to restore strength to the orthodox party, was the rejection of the intrusive prelate.

24th Nov.  
A. D. 380.

The first act of Theodosius on his arrival at Constantinople, was to issue an edict, expelling the Arians from the churches, and summoning Demophilus, the Arian bishop, to conform to the Nicene doctrine. Demophilus refused. The Emperor commanded that those who would not unite to establish Christian peace should retire from the houses of Christian prayer. Demophilus assembled his followers, and quoting the words of the Gospel, “ If you are persecuted in one city, flee unto another,” retired before the irresistible authority of the Emperor. The next step was the appointment of the reluctant Gregory to the see, and his enthronisation, in the principal church of the metropolis. Environed by the armed legionaries, in military pomp, accompanied by the Emperor himself, Gregory, amazed and bewildered, and perhaps sensible of the incongruity of the scene with the true Christian character, headed the triumphal procession. All around he saw the sullen and menacing faces of the Arian multitude, and his ear might catch their suppressed murmurs ; even the heavens, for the morning was bleak and cloudy, seemed to look down with cold indifference on the scene. No sooner, however, had Gregory, with the Emperor, passed the rails which divided the sanctuary from the nave of the church, than

(1) The panegyric on the philosopher Heron.

(2) Some of their names were whimsically connected with the Egyptian mythology, Ammon, Anubis, and Hermanubis.

(3) The interference of the Egyptians is altogether remarkable. Could there be a design to establish the primacy of Alexandria over Con-

stantinople, and so over the East? It is observable that in his law, Theodosius names as the examples of doctrine, the Bishop of Rome in the West, of Alexandria in the East. The intrigues of Theophilus against Chrysostom rather confirm this notion of an attempt to erect an Eastern papacy.



the sun burst forth in his splendour, the clouds were dissipated, and the glorious light came streaming in upon the applauding congregation. At once a shout of acclamation demanded the enthronisation of Gregory.

But Gregory, commanding only in his eloquence from the pulpit, seems to have wanted the firmness and vigour necessary for the prelate of a great metropolis. Theodosius summoned the council of Constantinople; and Gregory, embarrassed by the multiplicity of affairs; harassed by objections to the validity of his own election; entangled in the feuds which arose out of the contested election to the see of Antioch, entreated, and obtained, apparently the unwilling, assent of the bishops and the Emperor to abdicate his dignity, and to retire to his beloved privacy. His retreat, in some degree disturbed by the interest which he still took in the see of Nazianzum, gradually became more complete, till, at length, he withdrew into solitude, and ended his days in that peace, which perhaps was not less sincerely enjoyed from his experience of the cares and vexations of worldly dignity. Arianza, his native village, was the place of his seclusion; the gardens, the trees, the fountain, familiar to his youth, welcomed his old age. But Gregory had not exhausted the fears, the dangers, or the passions of life. The desires of youth still burned in his withered body, and demanded the severest macerations. The sight or even the neighbourhood of females afflicted his sensitive conscience; and instead of allowing ease or repose to his aged frame, his bed was a hard mat, his coverlid sackcloth, his dress one thin tunic; his feet were bare; he allowed himself no fire, and here, in the company of the wild-beasts, he prayed with bitter tears, he fasted, and devoted his hours to the composition of poetry, which, from its extreme difficulty, he considered as an act of penitence. His painful existence was protracted to the age of ninety.

The complete restoration of Constantinople to the orthodox communion demanded even more powerful eloquence, and far more vigorous authority, than that of Gregory. If it was not finally achieved, its success was secured, by the most splendid orator who had ever adorned the Eastern church. Sixteen years after the retirement of Gregory, the fame of Chrysostom designated him as the successor to that important dignity.

Chrysostom was the model of a preacher for a great capital (1). Clear, rather than profound, his dogmatic is essentially moulded up with his moral teaching. He is the champion, not so exclusively of any system of doctrines, as of Christian holiness against the vices, the dissolute manners, the engrossing love of amusement, which prevailed in the new Rome of the East. His doctrines flow naturally

Chrysostom.

(1) Compare the several lives of Chrysostom: his works, and in Tillemont. I have only the first volume of Neander's *Joannes Chrysostomus* by Palladius, that in the Benedictine edition of

from his subject, or from the passage of Scripture under discussion ; his illustrations are copious and happy ; his style free and fluent ; while he is an unrivalled master in that rapid and forcible application of incidental occurrences, which gives such life and reality to eloquence. He is, at times, in the highest sense, dramatic in his manner.

Chrysostom, like all the more ardent spirits of his age, was enamoured in his early youth of monasticism. But this he had gradually thrown off, even while he remained at Antioch. Though by no means formally abandoning these principles, or lowering his admiration of this imaginary perfection of religion, in his later works he is more free, popular, and practical. His ambition is not so much to elevate a few enthusiastic spirits to a high-toned and mystic piety, as to impregnate the whole population of a great capital with Christian virtue and self-denial.

Life of  
Chrysos-  
tom.

John, who obtained the name of Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed, was born at Antioch, about the year 347. He was brought up by his mother in the Christian faith ; he studied rhetoric under the celebrated Libanius, who used his utmost arts, and displayed all that is captivating in Grecian poetry and philosophy, to enthrall the imagination of his promising pupil. Libanius, in an extant epistle, rejoices at the success of Chrysostom at the bar in Antioch. He is said to have lamented on his death-bed the sacrilegious seduction of the young orator by the Christians ; for to him he had intended to bequeath his school, and the office of maintaining the dignity of Paganism.

But the eloquence of Chrysostom was not to waste itself in the barren litigations of the courts of justice in Antioch, or in the vain attempt to infuse new life into the dead philosophy and religion of Greece. He felt himself summoned to a nobler field. At the age of eighteen, Chrysostom began to study that one source of eloquence, to which the human heart responded, the sacred writings of the Christians. The church was not slow in recognising the value of such a proselyte. He received the strongest encouragement from Meletius, Bishop of Antioch ; he was appointed a reader in the church. But the soul of Chrysostom was not likely to embrace these stirring tenets with coolness or moderation. A zealous friend inflamed, by precept and emulation, the fervour of his piety : they proposed to retire to one of the most remote hermitages in Syria ; and the great Christian orator was almost self-doomed to silence, or to exhaust his power of language in prayers and ejaculations, heard by no human ear. The mother of Chrysostom saved the Christian church from this fatal loss. There is something exquisitely touching in the traits of domestic affection which sometimes gleam through the busy pages of history. His mother had become a widow at the age of twenty ; to the general admiration, she had remained faithful

to the memory of her husband, and to her maternal duties. As soon as she heard the determination of her son to retire to a distant region (Chrysostom himself relates the incident), she took him by the hand, she led him to her chamber, she made him sit by her on the bed, in which she had borne him, and burst out into tears, and into language more sad than tears. She spoke of the cares and troubles of widowhood; grievous as they had been, she had ever one consolation, the gazing on his face, and beholding in him the image of his departed father. Before he could speak, he had thus been her comfort and her joy. She reminded him of the fidelity with which she had administered the paternal property. "Think not that I would reproach you with these things. I have but one favour to entreat — make me not a second time a widow; awaken not again my slumbering sorrows. Wait, at least, for my death; perhaps I shall depart before long. When you have laid me in the earth, and reunited my bones to those of your father, then travel wherever thou wilt, even beyond the sea; but, as long as I live, endure to dwell in my house, and offend not God by afflicting your mother, who is at least blameless towards thee (1)."

Whether released by the death of his mother, or hurried away by the irresistible impulse which would not allow him to withhold himself from what he calls "the true philosophy," Chrysostom, some years afterwards, entered into one of the monasteries in the neighbourhood of Antioch. He had hardly escaped the episcopal dignity, which was almost forced upon him by the admirers of his early piety. Whether he considered this gentle violence lawful to compel devout Christians to assume awful dignity, he did not hesitate to practise a pious fraud on his friend Basilus, with whom he promised to submit to consecration. Basilus found himself a bishop, but looked in vain for his treacherous friend, who had deceived him into this momentous step, but deserted him at the appointed hour.

But the voice of Chrysostom was not doomed to silence even in his seclusion. The secession of so many of the leading youths from the duties of civil life, from the municipal offices and the service of the army, had awakened the jealousy of the government. Valens issued his edict against those "followers of idleness (2)." The monks were, in some instances, assailed by popular outrage; parents, against whose approbation their children had deserted their homes and retired into the desert, appealed to the imperial authority to maintain their own. Chrysostom came forward as the zealous, the vehement, advocate of the "true philosophy (3)." He threatened misery in this life, and all the pains of

(1) M. Villemain, in his *Essai sur l'Éloquence Chrétienne dans le Quatrième Siècle*, has pointed out the exquisite simplicity and tenderness of this passage. *De Sacerdotio*, i.

(2) *Ignaviae sectatores*.

(3) *Adversus Oppugnatores Vitæ Monasticæ*.



hell (of which he is prodigal in his early writings) against the unnatural, the soul-slaying fathers, who forced their sons to expose themselves to the guilt and danger of the world, and forbade them to enter into the earthly society of angels; thus he describes the monasteries near Antioch. He relates, with triumph, the clandestine conversion of a noble youth, through the connivance of his mother, whom the father, himself a soldier, had destined to serve in the armies of the empire.

But Chrysostom himself, whether he considered that the deep devotion of the monastery, for some years, had braced his soul to encounter the more perilous duties of the priesthood, appeared again in Antioch. His return was hailed by Flavianus, the bishop, who had succeeded to Meletius. He was ordained deacon, and then presbyter, and at once took his station in that office, which was sometimes reserved for the Pishop, as the principal preacher in that voluptuous and effeminate city.

The fervid imagination and glowing eloquence of Chrysostom, which had been lavished on the angelic immunity of the cœnobite or the hermit from the passions, ambition, and avarice inseparable from a secular life, now arrayed his new office in a dignity and saintly perfection, which might awake the purest ambition of the Christian. Chrysostom has the most exalted notion of the majesty, at the same time of the severity, of the sacerdotal character. His views of the office, of its mission and authority, are the most sublime; his demands upon their purity, blamelessness, and superiority to the rest of mankind, proportionably rigorous.

Nor, in the loftiness of his tone as a preacher, or his sanctity as a man, did he fall below his own standard of the Christian priesthood. His preaching already took its peculiar character. It was not so much addressed to the opinions as to the conscience of man. He threw aside the subtleties of speculative theology, and repudiated, in general, the fine-drawn allegory in which the interpreters of Scripture had displayed their ingenuity, and amazed and fruitlessly wearied their unimproved audience. His scope was plain, severe, practical. Rigidly orthodox in his doctrine, he seemed to dwell more on the fruits of a pure theology (though at times he could not keep aloof from controversy) than on theology itself.

If, in her ordinary course of voluptuous amusement, of constant theatrical excitement, Antioch could not but listen to the commanding voice of the Christian orator, it is no wonder that in her hour of danger, possibly of impending ruin, the whole city stood trembling and awe-struck beneath his pulpit. Soon after he assumed the sacerdotal office, Chrysostom was placed in an extraordinary position as the representative of the bishop.

In one of those sudden tumultuous insurrections which take place among the populace of large cities, Antioch had resisted the exor-

bitant demands of a new taxation, maltreated the imperial officers, and thrown down and dragged about, with every kind of insult, the statues of Theodosius, his empress, and their two sons (1). The stupor of fear succeeded to this momentary outbreak of mutiny, which had been quelled by a single troop of archers. For days the whole people awaited in shuddering agitation the sentence of the Emperor. The anger of Theodosius was terrible ; he had not yet, it is true, ordered the massacre of the whole population of Thessalonica, but his stern and relentless character was too well known. Dark rumours spread abroad that he had threatened to burn Antioch, to exterminate its inhabitants, and to pass the ploughshare over its ruins. Multitudes fled destitute from the city ; others remained shut up in their houses, for fear of being seized. Instead of the forum crowded with thousands, one or two persons were seen timidly wandering about. The gay and busy Antioch had the appearance of a captured and depopulated city. The theatres, the circus, were closed ; no marriage song was heard ; even the schools were shut up (2). In the meantime the government resumed its unlimited and unresisted authority, which it administered with the sternest severity, and rigorous inquisition into the guilt of individuals. The prisons were thronged with criminals of every rank and station ; confiscation swept away their wealth, punishments of every degree were inflicted on their persons. Citizens of the highest rank were ignominiously scourged ; those who confessed their guilt were put to the sword, burned alive, or thrown to the wild beasts (3). Chrysostom's description of the agony of those days is in the highest style of dramatic oratory. Women of the highest rank, brought up with the utmost delicacy, and accustomed to every luxury, were seen crowding around the gates, or in the outer judgment hall, unattended, repelled by the rude soldiery, but still clinging to the doors or prostrate on the ground, listening to the clash of the scourges, the shrieks of the tortured victims, and the shouts of the executioners ; one minute supposing that they recognised the familiar voices of fathers, husbands, or brothers ; or trembling lest those who were undergoing torture should denounce their relatives and friends. Chrysostom passes from this scene, by a bold but natural transition, to the terrors of the final judgment, and the greater agony of that day.

Now was the time to put to the test the power of Christianity, and

(1) It is curious to observe the similarity between the Pagan and Christian accounts of this incident which we have the good fortune to possess. Both ascribe the guilt to a few strangers, under the instigation of diabolic agency. *Τοιούτοις ὑπηρεταῖς ὁ κακὸς χράμενος δαίμων, ἔπραξεν, ἃ σιοπάν ἐβουλόμην.* This is a sentence of Libanius (ad Theodos. iv. p. 638.), not of Chrysostom. Flavian exhorts Theodosius to pardon Antioch, in order that he

may disappoint the malice of the devils, to whom he ascribes the guilt. Chrys. Hom. xvi. ad Antioch.

(2) Liban. ad Theod. in fin.

(3) Chrysostom asserts this in a fine passage, in which he reminds his hearers of their greater offences against God. *Καὶ οἱ μὲν σιδήρα, οἱ δὲ θηρίους παραδοθέντες ἀτάλαντοι.* Hom. iii. 6. p. 45.

to ascertain whether the orthodox opinions of Theodosius were altogether independent of that humanity which is the essence of the Gospel. Would the Christian Emperor listen to the persuasive supplications of the Christian prelate—that prelate for whose character he had expressed the highest respect ?

Flavianus  
sets forth  
to inter-  
cede for  
mercy.

While Flavianus, the aged and feeble bishop, quitting the bedside of his dying sister, set forth on his pious mission to the West, on Chrysostom devolved the duty of assuaging the fears, of administering consolation, and of profiting by this state of stupor and dejection to correct the vices and enforce serious thoughts upon the light and dissolute people. Day after day he ascended the pulpit ; the whole population, deserting the forum, forgetting the theatre and the circus, thronged the churches. There was even an attendance (an unusual circumstance) after the hour of dinner. The whole city became a church. There is wonderful skill and judgment in the art with which the orator employs the circumstances of the time for his purpose ; in the manner in which he allays the terror, without too highly encouraging the hopes, of the people : “ The clemency of the Emperor *may* forgive their guilt, but the Christians ought to be superior to the fear of death ; they cannot be secure of pardon in this world, but they may be secure of immortality in the world to come.”

Sentence  
of Theo-  
dosius.

Long before the success of the bishop's intercession could be known, the delegates of the Emperor, Hellabichus and Cæsarius, arrived with the sentence of Theodosius, which was merciful, if compared with what they had feared,—the destruction of the city, and the massacre of its inhabitants. But it was fatal to the pleasures, the comforts, the pride of Antioch. The theatres and the circus were to be closed ; Antioch was no longer to enjoy theatrical representations of any kind ; the baths, in an Eastern city not objects of luxury alone, but of cleanliness and health, were to be shut ; and Antioch was degraded from the rank of a metropolitan city, to a town under the jurisdiction of Laodicea.

The city was in the deepest depression, but Chrysostom maintained his lofty tone of consolation. Antioch ought to rejoice at the prohibition of those scenes of vice and dissipation, which disgraced the theatres : the baths tended to effeminacy and luxury ; they were disdained by true philosophy—the monastic system ; the dignity of the city did not depend on its rank in the empire, but on the virtue of its citizens ; it might be a heavenly, if no longer an earthly, metropolis.

The inquisition into the guilt of those who had actually assisted, or had looked on in treasonable indifference, while the statues of the Emperor and his family were treated with such unseemly contumely, had commenced under the regular authorities ; it was now carried on with stern and indiscriminate impartiality. The pri-



soners were crowded together in a great enclosure, in one close and agonising troop, which comprehended the whole senate of the city. The third day of the inquiry was to witness the execution of the guilty, and no one, not the relatives or kindred of the wealthiest, the noblest, or the highest in station, knew whether the doom had not fallen on their fathers or husbands.

But Hellabichus and Cæsarius were men of humanity, and ventured to suspend the execution of the sentence. They listened to the supplications of the people. One mother, especially, seized and clung to the reins of the horse of Hellabichus. The monks who, while the philosophers, as Chrysostom asserts, had fled the city, had poured down from their mountain solitudes, and during the whole time had endeavoured to assuage the fear of the people, and to awaken the compassion of the government, renewed, not without effect, their pious exertions (1). They crowded round the tribunal, and one, named Macedonius, was so courageous as boldly to remonstrate against the crime of avenging the destruction of a few images of brass by the destruction of the image of God in so many human beings. Cæsarius himself undertook a journey to Constantinople for farther instructions.

At length Chrysostom had the satisfaction to announce to the people the return of the bishop with an act of unlimited amnesty. He described the interview of Flavianus with the Emperor; his silence, his shame, his tears, when Theodosius gently reminded him of his benefactions to the city, which enhanced their heinous ingratitude. The reply of Flavianus, though the orator professes to relate it on the authority of one present at the interview, is no doubt coloured by the eloquence of Chrysostom. The Bishop acknowledged the guilt of the city in the most humiliating language. But he urged, that the greater that guilt, the greater would be the magnanimity of the Emperor if he should pardon it. He would raise statues, not of perishable materials, in the hearts of all mankind. It is not the glory of Theodosius, he proceeded, but Christianity itself, which is put to the test before the world. The Jews and Greeks, even the most remote barbarians, are anxiously watching whether this sentence will be that of Christian clemency. How will they all glorify the Christian's God if he shall restrain the wrath of the master of the world, and subdue him to that humanity which would be magnanimous even in a private man. Inexorable punishment might awe other cities into obedience, but mercy would attach mankind by the stronger bonds of love. It would be an imperishable example of clemency, and all future acts of other sovereigns would be but the fruit of this, and would reflect their glory on Theodosius. What glory to concede

Issue of  
the inter-  
view of  
Flavianus  
with the  
Emperor.

(1) Chrysostom, Hom. xvii. vol. ii. p. 172.

that to a single aged priest, from the fear of God, which he had refused to all other suppliants. For himself, Flavianus could never bear to return to his native city; he would remain an exile, until that city was reconciled with the Emperor. Theodosius, it is said, called to mind the prayer of the Saviour for his enemies, and satisfied his wounded pride, that in his mercy he imitated his Redeemer. He was even anxious that Flavianus should return to announce the full pardon before the festival of Easter. "Let the Gentiles," exclaims the ardent preacher, "be confounded, or rather, let them be instructed by this unexampled instance of imperial clemency and episcopal influence (1)."

A. D. 398.  
Chrysos-  
tom bi-  
shop of  
Constan-  
tinople.

Theodosius had ceased to reign many years before Chrysostom was summoned to the pontifical throne of Constantinople. The East was governed by women and eunuchs. In assuming the episcopal throne of the metropolis, to which he is said to have been transported almost by force, Chrysostom, who could not but be conscious of his power over the minds of men, might entertain visions of the noblest and purest ambition. His views of the dignity of the sacerdotal character were as lofty as those of his contemporaries in the West; while he asserted their authority, which set them apart and far above the rest of mankind, he demanded a moral superiority, and entire devotion to their calling, which could not but rivet their authority upon the minds of men. The clergy, such as his glowing imagination conceived them, would unite the strongest corporate spirit with the highest individual zeal and purity. The influence of the bishop in Antioch, the deference which Theodosius had shown to the intercession of Flavianus, might encourage Chrysostom in the fallacious hope of restoring peace, virtue, and piety, as well as orthodoxy, in the imperial city.

Difference  
of the ac-  
cerdotal  
power in  
Rome and  
Constanti-  
nople.

But in the East, more particularly in the metropolis, the sacerdotal character never assumed the unassailable sanctity, the awful inviolability, which it attained in the West. The religion of Constantinople was that of the Emperor. Instead of growing up, like the Bishop of Rome, first to independence, afterwards to sovereignty, the presence of the imperial government overawed and obscured the religious supremacy. In Rome, the Pope was subject at times to the rebellious control of the aristocracy, or exposed to the irreverent fury of the populace; but he constantly emerged from his transient obscurity, and resumed his power. In Constantinople, a voluptuous court, a savage populace, at this period multitudes of concealed Arians, and heretics of countless shades and hues at all periods, thwarted the plans, debased the dignity, and desecrated the person of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

In some respects, Chrysostom's character wanted the peculiar,

(1) Chrysostom had ventured to assert — "Ἀπερ οὐδενὶ ἑτέρῳ, ταῦτα χαριεῖται τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν. Hom. xxi. 3.

and perhaps inconsistent qualifications requisite for his position. He was the preacher, but not the man of the world. A great capital is apt to demand that magnificence in its prelate at which it murmurs. It will not respect less than splendid state and the show of authority, while at the same time it would have the severest austerity and the strongest display of humility,—the pomp of the Pontiff with the poverty and lowliness of the Apostle. Chrysostom carried the asceticism of the monk not merely into his private chamber, but into his palace and his hall. The great prelates of the West, when it was expedient, could throw off the monk and appear as statesmen or as nobles in their public transactions; though this, indeed, was much less necessary than in Constantinople. But Chrysostom cherished all these habits with zealous, perhaps with ostentatious, fidelity. Instead of munificent hospitality, he took his scanty meal in his solitary chamber. His rigid economy endured none of that episcopal sumptuousness with which his predecessor Nectarius had dazzled the public eye : he proscribed all the carpets, all silken dresses ; he sold the costly furniture and the rich vessels of his residence ; he was said even to have retrenched from the church some of its gorgeous plate, and to have sold some rich marbles and furniture designed for the Anastasia. He was lavish, on the other hand, in his expenditure on the hospitals and charitable institutions. But even the use to which they were applied, did not justify to the general feeling the alienation of those ornaments from the service of the church. The populace, who, no doubt, in their hours of discontent, had contrasted the magnificence of Nectarius with apostolical poverty, were now offended by the apostolical poverty of Chrysostom, which seemed unworthy of his lofty station.

But the Bishop of Constantinople had even a more difficult task in prescribing to himself the limits of his interference with secular affairs. It is easy to imagine, in the clergy, a high and serene indifference to the political tumults of society. This is perpetually demanded by those who find the sacerdotal influence adverse to their own views ; but to the calm inquirer, this simple question becomes the most difficult and intricate problem in religious history. If religion consisted solely in the intercourse between man and his Creator ; if the Christian minister were merely the officiating functionary in the ceremonial of the church,—the human mediator between the devotion of man and the providence of God,—the voice which expresses the common adoration,—the herald who announces the general message of revelation to mankind,—nothing could be more clear than the line which might exclude him from all political, or even all worldly affairs. But Christianity is likewise a moral power ; and as that moral power or guide, religion, and the minister of religion, cannot refrain from interposing in all questions

Political difficulties of Chrysostom.

Interference of the clergy in secular affairs.



of human conduct ; as the interpreter of the divine law to the perplexed and doubting conscience, it cannot but spread its dominion over the whole field of human action. In this character, religion embraced the whole life of man, public as well as private. How was the minister of that religion to pause and discriminate as to the extent of his powers, particularly since the public acts of the most eminent in station possessed such unlimited influence over the happiness of society, and even the eternal welfare of the whole community ? What public misconduct was not at the same time an unchristian act ? Were the clergy, by connivance, to become accomplices in vices which they did not endeavour to counteract ? Christianity on the throne, as in the cottage, was equally bound to submit on every point in which religious motive or principle ought to operate, in every act, therefore, of life, to the admitted restraints of the Gospel ; and the general feeling of Christianity at this period had invested the clergy with the right, or rather the duty, of enforcing the precepts of the Gospel on every professed believer. How, then, were the clergy to distinguish between the individual and political capacity of the man ; to respect the prince, yet to advise the Christian ; to look with indifference on one set of actions as secular, to admonish on the danger of another as affairs of conscience ?

Nor at this early period of its still aggressive, still consciously beneficial influence, could the hierarchy be expected to anticipate with coldly prophetic prudence the fatal consequence of some of its own encroachments on worldly authority. The bishop of a great capital was the conductor, the representative of the moral power of the Gospel, which was perpetually striving to obtain its ascendancy over brute force, violence, and vice ; and of necessity, perhaps, was not always cautious or discreet in the means to which it resorted. It became contaminated in the incessant strife, and forgot its end, or rather sought for the mastery, as its end, rather than as the legitimate means of promoting its beneficial objects. Under the full, and no doubt, at first, warrantable persuasion, that it was advancing the happiness and virtue of mankind, where should it arrest its own course, or set limits to its own humanising and improving interpositions ? Thus, under the constant temptation of assuming, as far as possible the management of affairs which were notoriously mismanaged through the vices of public men, the administration even of public matters by the clergy might seem, to them at least, to insure justice, disinterestedness, and clemency : till tried by the possession of power, they would be the last to discern the danger of being invested in that power.

The first signal interposition of Chrysostom in the political affairs of Constantinople was an act not merely of humanity but of gratitude. Eutropius the eunuch, minister of the feeble Arcadius, is

condemned to immortal infamy by the vigorous satire of Claudian. Among his few good deeds, had been the advancement of Chrysostom to the see of Constantinople. Eutropius had found it necessary to restrict the right of asylum, which began to be generally claimed by all the Christian churches, little foreseeing that to the bold assertion of that right he would owe his life.

There is something sublime in the first notion of the right of asylum. It is one of these institutions based in the universal religious sentiment of man; it is found in almost all religions. In the Greek, as in the Jewish, man took refuge from the vengeance, often from the injustice, of his fellow men, in the presence of the gods. Not merely private revenge, but the retributive severity of the law, stands rebuked before the dignity of the divine court, in which the criminal has lodged his appeal. The lustrations in the older religions, the rites of expiation and reconciliation performed in many of the temples, the appellations of certain deities, as the reconcilers or pacifiers of man (1), were enwoven with their mythology, and embodied in their poetry. But Christianity, in a still higher and more universal sense, might assume to take under its protection, in order to amend and purify, the outcast of society, whom human justice followed with relentless vengeance. As the representative of the God of mercy, it excluded no human being from the pale of repentance and would protect them, when disposed to that salutary change, if it could possibly be made consistent with the public peace and safety. The merciful intervention of the clergy between the criminal and his sentence, at a period when the laws were so implacable and sanguinary, was at once consistent with Christian charity, and tended to some mitigation of the ferocious manners of the age. It gave time at least for exasperated justice to reconsider its sentence, and checked that vindictive impulse, which if it did not outrun the law, turned it into instantaneous and irrevocable execution (2). But that which commenced in pure benevolence had already, it should seem, begun to degenerate into a source of power. The course of justice was impeded, but not by a wise discrimination between the more or less heinous delinquents, or a salutary penitential system, which might reclaim the guilty, and safely restore him to society.

Right of  
asylum.

Like other favourites of arbitrary sovereigns, Eutropius was suddenly precipitated from the height of power; the army forced the sentence of his dismissal from the timid Emperor, and the furious

A. D. 399.

(1) The ἀποτροπαῖοι, or averuncatores.

(2) In a law which is extant in Greek, there is an elaborate argument, that if the right of asylum had been granted by the Heathen to their altars, and to the statues of the Emperors, it ought to belong to the temples of God.

See the laws which defined the right of asylum, Cod. Theodos. ix. 45. 3. *et seqq.* The sacred space extended to the outer gates of the church.

But those who took refuge in the church were on no account to be permitted to profane the holy building itself by eating or sleeping within it. "Quibus si perfuga non adnuit, neque consentit, preferenda humanitati religio est." There was a strong prohibition against introducing arms into the churches; a prohibition which the Emperors themselves did not scruple to violate on more than one occasion.

populace, as usual, thirsted for the blood of him to whose unbounded sway they had so long submitted in humble obedience. Eutropius fled in haste to that asylum, the sanctity of which had been limited by his own decree; and the courage and influence of Chrysostom protected that most forlorn of human beings, the discarded favourite of a despot. The armed soldiery and the raging populace were met at the door of the church by the defenceless ecclesiastic; his demeanour and the sanctity of the place arrested the blind fury of the assailants; Chrysostom before the Emperor pleaded the cause of Eutropius with the same fearless freedom and for once the life of a fallen minister was spared; his sentence was commuted for banishment. His fate indeed was only delayed, he was afterwards brought back from Cyprus, his place of exile, and beheaded at Chalcodon.

Chrysostom saves the life of Eutropius.

But with all his courage, his eloquence, his moral dignity, Chrysostom, instead of establishing a firm and permanent authority over Constantinople, became himself the victim of intrigue and jealousy. Besides his personal habits and manners, the character of Chrysostom, firm on great occasions, and eminently persuasive when making a general address to the multitude, was less commanding and authoritative in his constant daily intercourse with the various orders: calm and self-possessed as an orator, he was accused of being passionate and overbearing in ordinary business: the irritability of feeble health may have caused some part of this infirmity. Men, whose minds, like that of Chrysostom, are centered on one engrossing object, are apt to abandon the details of business to others, who thus become necessary to them, and at length, if artful and dextrous, rule them with inextricable sway: they have much knowledge of mankind, little practical acquaintance with individual men. Thus, Chrysostom was completely governed by his deacon Serapion, who managed his affairs, and like all men of address in such stations, while he exercised all the power, and secured the solid advantages, left the odium and responsibility upon his master. On the whole, the character of Chrysostom retained something of the unworldly monastic enthusiasm, and wanted decisive practical wisdom, when compared, for instance, with Ambrose in the West and thus his character powerfully contributed to his fall (1).

Chrysostom governed by his deacon Serapion.

But the circumstances of his situation might have embarrassed even Ambrose himself. All orders and interests conspired against him. The court would not endure the grave and severe censor; the clergy rebelled against the rigour of the prelate's discipline; the populace, though when under the spell of his eloquence, fondly attached to his person, no doubt, in general resented his impla-

(1) The unfavourable view of Chrysostom's character is brought out perhaps with more than impartiality by the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen, who wrote at Constantinople, and may have preserved much of the hostile tradition relating to him.



cable condemnation of their amusements. The Arians, to whom, in his uncompromising zeal, he had persuaded the Emperor to refuse a single church, though demanded by the most powerful subject of the empire, Gainas the Goth, were still no doubt secretly powerful. A Pagan præfect, Optatus, seized the opportunity of wreaking his animosity towards Christianity, itself, upon its powerful advocate. Some wealthy females are named as resenting the severe condemnation of their dress and manners (1).

Of all these adversaries, the most dangerous, the most persevering, and the most implacable, were those of his own order and his own rank (2). The sacerdotal authority in the East was undermined by its own divisions. The imperial power, which, in the hands of a violent, and not irreproachable woman, the Empress Eudoxia, might, perhaps, have quailed before the energy of a blameless and courageous prelate, allied itself with one section of the church, and so secured its triumph over the whole. The more Chrysostom endeavoured to carry out by episcopal authority those exalted notions of the sacerdotal character, which he had developed in his work upon the priesthood, the more he estranged many of his natural supporters. He visited the whole of Asia Minor; degraded bishops; exposed with unsparing indignation the vices and venality of the clergy; and involved them all in one indiscriminate charge of simony and licentiousness. The assumption of this authority was somewhat questionable; the severity with which it was exercised did not reconcile the reluctant province to submission. Among the malcontent clergy, four bishops took the lead; but the head of this unrelenting faction was Theophilus, the violent and unscrupulous Prelate of Alexandria. The apparently trivial causes which inflamed the hostility of Theophilus confirm a suspicion, previously suggested, that the rivalry of the two principal sees in the East mingled with the personal animosity of Theophilus against the Bishop of Constantinople. Chrysostom had been accused of extending his jurisdiction beyond its legitimate bounds. Certain monks of Nitria had fled from the persecutions of Theophilus, and taken refuge in Constantinople, and Chrysostom had extended his countenance, if not his protection, to these revolted subjects of the Alexandrian prelate; but he had declined to take legal cognisance of the dispute as a superior prelate, or as the head of a council; partly, he states (3), out of respect for Theophilus, partly because he was unwilling to interfere in the affairs of another province. But Theophilus was not so scrupulous; he revenged himself for the supposed invasion of his own province by a most daring inroad on that of his rival. He assumed for the Patriarch of Alexandria the right of presiding over

Theophi-  
lus of  
Alexan-  
dria.

(1) Tillemont, p. 180.

(2) The good Tillemont confesses this humiliating truth with shame and reluctance. *Vie de Chrysostome*, p. 181.

(3) *Epist. ad Innocentium Papam*, vol. iii. p. 516.

the Eastern bishops, and of summoning the Bishop of Constantinople before this irregular tribunal. Theophilus, with the sanction, if not by the invitation, of the Empress, landed at Constantinople. He was accompanied by a band of Alexandrian mariners, as a protection against the populace of the city.

Council of  
the Oak.

The council was held, not in Constantinople, but at a place called the Oak, in the suburbs of Chalcedon. It consisted for the most part of Egyptian bishops, under the direct influence of Theophilus, and of Asiatic prelates, the personal enemies of Chrysostom (1). For fourteen days it held its sessions, and received informations, which gradually grew into twenty-nine grave and specific charges. Four times was Chrysostom summoned to appear before this self-appointed tribunal, of which it was impossible for him to recognise the legal authority. In the meantime, he was not inactive in his peculiar sphere—the pulpit. Unfortunately, the authenticity of the sermon ascribed to him at this period is not altogether certain, nor the time at which some extant discourses, if genuine, were delivered, conclusively settled. One, however, bears strong indications of the manner and sentiments of Chrysostom; and it is generally acknowledged that he either did boldly use, or was accused of using language full of contumelious allusion to the Empress. This sermon, therefore, if not an accurate report of his expressions, may convey the sense of what he actually uttered, or which was attributed to him by his adversaries (2). “The billows,” said the energetic prelate, “are mighty, and the storm furious; but we fear not to be wrecked, for we are founded on a rock. What can I fear? Death? *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Exile? *The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.* Confiscation? *We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out of it.* I scorn the terrors, and smile at the advantages, of life. I fear not death. I desire to live only for your profit. The church against which you strive, dashes away your assaults into idle foam. It is fixed by God, who shall revoke it? The church is stronger than Heaven itself! *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*\*\*\* But you know my brethren, the true cause of my ruin. Because I have not strewn rich carpets on my floors, nor clothed myself in silken robes; because I have discountenanced the sensuality of certain persons. The seed of the

(1) It is contested whether there were thirty or forty-six bishops.

(2) It is singularly characteristic of the Christianity of the times to observe the charges against which Chrysostom protests with the greatest vehemence; and this part of the oration in question is confirmed by one of his letters to Cyriacus. Against that of personal impurity with a female, he calmly offers the most unquestionable evidence. But he was likewise accused of having administered baptism after he

had eaten. On this he breaks out: — “If I have done this, Anathema upon me, may I be no longer counted among bishops, nor be admitted among the angels accepted of God.” He was said to have administered the sacrament to those who had in like manner broken their fast. “If I have done so, may I be rejected of Christ.” He then justifies himself, even if guilty, by the example of Paul, and even of Christ himself, but still seems to look on this breach of discipline with the utmost horror.

serpent is still alive, but grace is still on the side of Elijah." Then follows in obscure and embarrassed language, as though, if genuine, the preacher were startled at his own boldness, an allusion to the fate of John the Baptist, and to the hostility of Herodias : — " It is a time of wailing—lo, all things tend to *disgrace*; but time judgeth all things." The fatal word, "*disgrace*," (*ἀδοξία*) was supposed to be an allusion to Eudoxia, the Empress.

There was a secret understanding between the court and the council. The court urged the proceedings of the council, and the council pronounced the sentence of deposition, but left to the court to take cognisance of the darker charge of high treason, of which they asserted Chrysostom to be guilty, but which was beyond their jurisdiction. The alleged treason was the personal insult to the Empress Eudoxia, which was construed into exciting the people to rebellion. But the execution of this sentence embarrassed the council and irresolute government. Chrysostom now again ruled the popular mind with unbounded sway. It would have been dangerous to have seized him in the church, environed, as he constantly was, by crowds of admiring hearers, whom a few fervent words might have maddened into insurrection.

Condem-  
nation of  
Chryso-  
stom.

Chrysostom, however, shrunk, whether from timidity or Christian peacefulness of disposition, from being the cause, even innocently, of tumult and bloodshed. He had neither the ambition, the desperate recklessness, nor perhaps the resolution, of a demagogue. He would not be the Christian tribune of the people. He seized the first opportunity of the absence of his hearers quietly to surrender himself to the imperial officers. He was cautiously transported by night, though the jealous populace crowded the streets, in order to release their prelate from the hands of his enemies, to the opposite side of the Bosphorus, and confined in a villa on the Bithynian shore.

Chryso-  
stom leaves  
Constanti-  
nople.

The triumph of Chrysostom's enemies was complete. Theophilus entered the city, and proceeded to wreak his vengeance on the partisans of his adversary; the Empress rejoiced in the conscious assurance of her power; the people were overawed into gloomy and sullen silence.

The night of the following day, strange and awful sounds were heard throughout the city. The palace, the whole of Constantinople, shook with an earthquake. The Empress, as superstitious as she was violent, when she felt her chamber rock beneath her, shuddering at the manifest wrath of Heaven, fell on her knees, and entreated the Emperor to revoke the fatal sentence. She wrote a hasty letter, disclaiming all hostility to the banished prelate, and protesting that she was "innocent of his blood." The next day, the palace was surrounded by clamorous multitudes, impatiently demanding his recall. The voice of the people and the voice of God

Earth-  
quake.



Return of  
Chrysos-  
tom.

seemed to join in the vindication of Chrysostom. The edict of recall was issued; the Bosphorus swarmed with barks, eager to communicate the first intelligence, and to obtain the honour of bringing back the guardian and the pride of the city. He was met on his arrival by the whole population, men, women, and children; all who could, bore torches in their hands, and hymns of thanksgiving, composed for the occasion, were chaunted before him, as he proceeded to the great church. His enemies fled on all sides. Soon after, Theophilus, on the demand of a free council, left Constantinople, at the dead of night, and embarked for Alexandria.

There is again some doubt as to the authenticity of the first discourse delivered by Chrysostom on this occasion,—none of the second. But the first was an extemporaneous address, to which the extant speech appears to correspond. “What shall I say? Blessed be God! These were my last words on my departure, these the first on my return. Blessed be God! because he permitted the storm to rage; Blessed be God! because he has allayed it. Let my enemies behold how their conspiracy has advanced my peace, and redounded to my glory. Before, the church alone was crowded, now, the whole forum is become a church. The games are celebrating in the circus, but the whole people pour like a torrent to the church. Your prayers in my behalf are more glorious than a diadem,—the prayers both of men and women; for in *Christ there is neither male nor female.*”

In the second oration he draws an elaborate comparison between the situation of Abraham in Egypt and his own. The barbarous Egyptian (this struck, no doubt, at Theophilus) had endeavoured to defile his Sarah, the church of Constantinople; but the faithful church had remained, by the power of God uncontaminated by this rebuked Abimelech. He dwelt with pardonable pride on the faithful attachment of his followers. They had conquered; but how? by prayer and submission. The enemy had brought arms into the sanctuary, they had prayed; like a spider’s web the enemy had been scattered, they remained firm as a rock. The Empress herself had joined the triumphal procession, when the sea became, as the city, covered with all ranks, all ages, and both sexes (1).

But the peace and triumph of Chrysostom were not lasting. As the fears of the Empress were allayed, the old feeling of hatred to the Bishop, embittered by the shame of defeat, and the constant suspicion that either the preacher or his audience pointed at her his most vigorous declamation, rankled in the mind of Eudoxia. It had become a strife for ascendancy, and neither could recede with safety and honour. Opportunities could not but occur to enrage and exasperate; nor would ill-disposed persons be wanting to in-

(1) Chrysostom, in both these discourses, states a curious circumstance, that the Jews of Constantinople took great interest in his cause.

flame the passions of the Empress, by misrepresenting and personally applying the bold and indignant language of the prelate.

A statue of the Empress was about to be erected; and on these occasions of public festival the people were wont to be indulged in dances, pantomimes, and every kind of theatrical amusement. The zeal of Chrysostom was always especially directed against these idolatrous amusements, which often, he confesses, drained the church of his hearers. This, now ill-timed, zeal was especially awakened, because the statue was to be erected, and the rejoicings to take place, in front of the entrance to the great church, the St. Sophia. His denunciations were construed into personal insults to the Empress; she threatened a new council. The prelate threw off the remaining restraints of prudence; repeated more explicitly the allusion which he had before but covertly hinted. He thundered out a homily, with the memorable exordium, "Herodias is maddening, Herodias is dancing, Herodias demands the head of John." If Chrysostom could even be suspected of such daring outrage against the temporal sovereign; if he ventured on language approaching to such unmeasured hostility; it was manifest that either the imperial authority must quail and submit to the sacerdotal domination, or employ, without scruple, its power to crush the bold usurpation.

Statue  
of the Em-  
press.

An edict of the Emperor suspended the prelate from his functions. Though forty-two bishops adhered, with inflexible fidelity, to his cause, he was condemned by a second hostile council, not on any new charge, but for contumacy, in resisting the decrees of the former assembly, and for a breach of the ecclesiastical laws, in resuming his authority while under the condemnation of a council.

Second  
condemna-  
tion of  
Chryso-  
stom.

The soldiers of the Emperor were more dangerous enemies than the prelates. In the midst of the solemn celebration of Good Friday, in the great church of Santa Sophia, the military forced their way, not merely into the nave, but up to the altar, on which were placed the consecrated elements. Many were trodden under foot; many wounded by the swords of the soldiers; the clergy were dragged to prison; some females, who were about to be baptized, were obliged to fly with their disordered apparel: the waters of the font were stained with blood; the soldiers pressed up to the altar; seized the sacred vessels as their plunder: the sacred elements were scattered about; their garments were bedewed with the blood of the Redeemer (1). Constantinople for several days had the appearance of a city which had been stormed. Wherever the partisans of Chrysostom were assembled, they were assaulted and dispersed by the

A. D. 404.  
Tumults  
in the  
church.

(1) Chrysostom, Epist. ad Innocentium, c. iii. v. iii, p. 519. Chrysostom exempts the Emperor from all share in this outrage, but attributes it to the hostile bishops.

soldiery; females were exposed to insult, and one frantic attempt was made to assassinate the prelate (1).

Chrysos-  
tom sur-  
renders.

Chrysostom at length withdrew from the contest; he escaped from the friendly custody of his adherents, and surrendered himself to the imperial officers. He was immediately conveyed by night to the Asiatic shore. At the instant of his departure, another fearful calamity agitated the public mind. The church which he left, burst into flames, and the conflagration, said to have first broken out in the episcopal throne, reached the roof of the building, and spread from thence to the senate-house. These two magnificent edifices, the latter of which contained some noble specimens of ancient art, became in a few hours a mass of ruins. The partisans of Chrysostom, and Chrysostom himself, were, of course, accused of this act, the author of which was never discovered, and in which no life was lost. But the bishop was charged with the horrible design of destroying his enemies in the church; his followers were charged with the guilt of incendiarism with a less atrocious object, that no bishop after Chrysostom might be seated in his pontifical throne (2).

The prelate was not permitted to choose his place of exile. The peaceful spots which might have been found in the more genial climate of Bithynia, or the adjacent provinces, would have been too near the capital. He was transported to Crucusus, a small town in the mountainous and savage district of Armenia. On his journey thither of several days, he suffered much from fever and disquiet of mind, and from the cruelty of the officer who commanded the guard.

His  
retreat.

Yet his influence was not extinguished by his absence. The Eastern Church was almost governed from the solitary cell of Chrysostom. He corresponded with all quarters; women of rank and opulence sought his solitude in disguise. The bishops of many distant sees sent him assistance, and coveted his advice. The Bishop of Rome received his letters with respect, and wrote back ardent commendations of his patience. The exile of Cucusus exercised perhaps more extensive authority than the Patriarch of Constantinople (3).

He was not, however, permitted to remain in peace in this miserable seclusion: sometimes his life was endangered by the invasions of the Isaurian marauders; and he was obliged to take refuge in

(1) See Letter to Olympias, p. 548.

(2) There are three laws in the Theodosian Code against unlawful and seditious meetings (*conventicula*), directed against the followers of Chrysostom,—the Joannite, as they were called, “*qui sacrilego animo auctoritatem nostri numinis ausi fuerint expugnare.*” The *deity* is the usual term, but the deity of the feeble Arcadius, and the passionate Eudoxia, reads strangely.

(3) Among his letters may be remarked those written to the celebrated Olympias. This wealthy widow, who had refused the solicitations or

commands of Theodosius to marry one of his favourites, had almost washed away, by her austerities and virtues, the stain of her nuptials, and might rank in Christian estimation with those unsullied virgins who had never been contaminated by marriage. She was the friend of all the distinguished and orthodox clergy,—of Gregory of Nazianzum, and of Chrysostom. Chrysostom records to her *praise*, that by her austerities, she had brought on painful diseases, which baffled the art of medicine. Chrysost. Epist. viii. p. 540



a neighbouring fortress, named Ardissa. He encouraged his ardent disciples with the hope, the assurance, of his speedy return; but he miscalculated the obstinate and implacable resentment of his persecutors. At length an order came to remove him to Pityus, on the Euxine, a still more savage place on the verge of the empire. He died on the journey, near Comana, in Pontus.

Some years afterwards, the remains of Chrysostom were transported to Constantinople with the utmost reverence, and received with solemn pomp. Constantinople, and the imperial family, submitted with eager zeal to worship as a saint him whom they would not endure as a prelate.

His re-  
mains  
transported  
to Con-  
stanti-  
nople.

The remarkable part in the whole of this persecution of Chrysostom is that it arose not out of difference of doctrine, or polemic hostility. No charge of heresy darkened the pure fame of the great Christian orator. His persecution had not the dignity of conscientious bigotry; it was a struggle for power between the temporal and ecclesiastical supremacy; but the passions and the personal animosities of ecclesiastics, the ambition, and perhaps the jealousy of the Alexandrian Patriarch, as to jurisdiction, lent themselves to the degradation of the episcopal authority in Constantinople, from which it never rose. No doubt the choleric temper, the overstrained severity, the monastic habits, the ambition to extend his authority, perhaps beyond its legitimate bounds, and the indiscreet zeal of Chrysostom, laid him open to his adversaries; but in any other station, in the episcopate of any other city, these infirmities would have been lost in the splendour of his talents and his virtues. Though he might not have weaned the general mass of the people from their vices, or their amusements, which he proscribed with equal severity, yet he would have commanded general respect; and nothing less than a schism, arising out of religious difference, would have shaken or impaired his authority.

At all events, the fall of Chrysostom was an inauspicious omen, and a warning which might repress the energy of future prelates; and, doubtless, the issue of this conflict materially tended to degrade the office of the chief bishop in the Eastern empire. It may be questioned whether the proximity of the court, and such a court as that of the East, would, under any circumstances, have allowed the episcopate to assume its legitimate power, far less to have encroached on the temporal sovereignty. But after this time, the Bishop of Constantinople almost sank into a high officer of state; appointed by the influence, if not directly nominated by the Emperor, his gratitude was bound to reverence, or his prudence to dread, that arbitrary power which had raised him from nothing, and might dismiss him to his former insignificance. Except on some rare occasions, he bowed with the rest of the empire before the capricious will of the sovereign or the ruling favourite; he was content if the

Emperor respected the outward ceremonial of the church, and did not openly espouse any heretical doctrine.

Christianity thus remained, in some respects, an antagonist principle counteracting by its perpetual remonstrance, and rivalling by its attractive ceremonial, the vices and licentious diversions of the capital; but its moral authority was not allied with power; it quailed under the universal despotism, and was entirely inefficient as a corrective of imperial tyranny. It thus escaped the evils inseparable from the undue elevation of the sacerdotal character, and the temptations to encroach beyond its proper limits on the civil power; but it likewise gradually sank far below that uncompromising independence, that venerable majesty, which might impose some restraint on the worst excesses of violence, and infuse justice and humanity into the manners of the court and of the people.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE GREAT PRELATES OF THE WEST.

Ambrose  
Arch-  
bishop of  
Milan.

THE character and the fate of Ambrose offer the strongest contrast with that of Chrysostom. Ambrose was no dreaming solitary brought up in the seclusion of the desert, or among a fraternity of religious husbandmen. He had been versed in civil business from his youth; he had already obtained a high station in the Imperial service. His eloquence had little of the richness, imaginative variety, or dramatic power of the Grecian orator; hard but vigorous, it was Roman, forensic, practical—we mean where it related to affairs of business, or addressed men in general; it has, as we shall hereafter observe, a very different character in some of his theological writings.

In Ambrose the sacerdotal character assumed a dignity and an influence as yet unknown; it first began to confront the throne, not only on terms of equality, but of superior authority, and to exercise a spiritual dictatorship over the supreme magistrate. The resistance of Athanasius to the Imperial authority had been firm but deferential, passive rather than aggressive. In his *public* addresses he had respected the majesty of the empire; at all events, the hierarchy of that period only questioned the authority of the sovereign in matters of faith. But in Ambrose the episcopal power acknowledged no limits to its moral dominion, and admitted no distinction of persons. While the bishops of Rome were comparatively without authority, and still partially obscured by the concentration of Paganism in the aristocracy of the Capitol, the Archbishop of Milan began to develop papal power and papal imperiousness. Ambrose was the

spiritual ancestor of the Hildebrands and the Innocents. Like Chrysostom, Ambrose had to strive against the passionate animosity of an empress, not merely exasperated against him by his suspected disrespect and disobedience, but by the bitterness of religious difference. Yet how opposite the result! And Ambrose had to assert his religious authority, not against the feeble Arcadius, but against his father, the great Theodosius. We cannot indeed but recognise something of the undegraded Roman of the West in Ambrose; Chrysostom has something of the feebleness and degeneracy of the Byzantine.

The father of Ambrose, who bore the same name, had administered the province of Gaul, as prætorian prefect. The younger Ambrose, while pursuing his studies at Rome, had attracted the notice of Probus, prætorian prefect of Italy. Ambrose, through his influence, was appointed to the administration of the provinces of Æmilia and Liguria (1). Probus was a Christian, and his parting admonition to the young civilian was couched in these prophetic words—"Rule the province, not as a judge, but as a bishop (2)." Milan was within the department assigned to Ambrose. This city had now begun almost to rival or eclipse Rome, as the capital of the Occidental empire, and from the celebrity of its schools it was called the Athens of the West. The Church of Milan was rent with divisions. On a vacancy caused by the death of Auxentius, the celebrated Arian, the two parties, the Arian and the Athanasian, violently contested the appointment of the bishop.

Youth of  
Ambrose.

Ambrose appeared in his civil character to allay the tumult, by the awe of his presence, and by the persuasive force of his eloquence. He spoke so wisely, and in such a Christian spirit, that a general acclamation suddenly broke forth, "Ambrose, be bishop—Ambrose, be bishop." Ambrose was yet only a catechumen; he attempted in every way, by assuming a severe character as a magistrate, and by flight, to elude the unexpected honour (3). The ardour of the people, and the approbation of the Emperor (4), compelled him to assume the office. Ambrose cast off at once the pomp and majesty of his civil state; but that which was in some degree disadvantageous to Chrysostom, his severe simplicity of life, only increased the admiration and attachment of the less luxurious, or at least less effeminate, West, to their pious prelate: for Ambrose assumed only the austerity, nothing of the inactive and contemplative seclusion of the monastic system. The only Eastern influence which fettered his strong mind was his earnest admiration of celibacy; in all other respects he was a Roman statesman, not a meditative Oriental, or rhetorical Greek. The strong contrast of this doctrine with the dis-

Ambrose  
Bishop.  
A. D. 374.

Ambrose  
advocate  
of celi-  
bacy.

(1) Chiefly from the life of Ambrose affixed to the Benedictine edition of his works; the Life by Paulinus; and Tillemont.

(2) Paull. Vit. Ambros. 8.

(3) De Offic.; Vita S. Ambros. p. xxxiv.; Epist. xxi. p. 865.; Epist. lxiii.

(4) Compare the account of Valentinian's conduct in Theodoret, iv. 7.



solute manners of Rome, which no doubt extended to Milan, made it the more impressive : it was received with all the ardour of novelty, and the impetuosity of the Italian character ; it captivated all ranks and all orders. Mothers shut up their daughters, lest they should be exposed to the chaste seduction of the bishop's eloquence : and, binding themselves by rash vows of virginity, forfeit the hope of becoming Roman matrons. Ambrose, immediately on his appointment, under Valentinian I., asserted that ecclesiastical power which he confirmed under the feeble reign of Gratian and Valentinian II. (1) ; he maintained it when he was confronted by a nobler antagonist, the great Theodosius. He assumed the office of director of the royal conscience, and he administered it with all the uncompromising moral dignity which had no indulgence for unchristian vices, for injustice, or cruelty, even in an emperor, and with all the stern and conscientious intolerance of one, with whom hatred of paganism and of heresy were articles of his creed. The Old and the New Testament met in the person of Ambrose—the implacable hostility to idolatry, the abhorrence of every deviation from the established formulary of belief ; the wise and courageous benevolence, the generous and unselfish devotion to the great interests of humanity.

If Christianity assumed a haughtier and more rigid tone in the conduct and writings of Ambrose, it was by no means forgetful of its gentler duties, in allaying human misery, and extending its beneficent care to the utmost bounds of society. With Ambrose it began its high office of mitigating the horrors of slavery, which now that war raged in turn on every frontier, might seem to threaten individually the whole free population of the empire. Rome, who had drawn new supplies of slaves from almost every frontier of her dominions, now suffered fearful reprisals ; her free citizens were sent into captivity and sold in the markets by the barbarians, whose ancestors had been bought and bartered by her insatiable slave trade. The splendid offerings of piety, the ornaments, even the consecrated vessels of the churches, were prodigally expended by the Bishop of Milan, in the redemption of captives (2). “The church possesses gold, not to treasure up, but to distribute it for the welfare and happiness of men. We are ransoming the souls of men from eternal perdition. It is not merely the lives of men, and the honour of women, which are endangered in captivity, but the faith of their children. The blood of redemption which has gleamed in those golden cups has sanctified them not for the service alone, but for the redemption of man (3).” These arguments may be considered as a generous repudiation of the ecclesiastical spirit for the

Redemption of captives by Ambrose.

(1) Theodoret, iv. 7.

(2) *Numerent quos redemerint templa captivos.*  
So Ambrose appeals, in excusable pride, to the

heathen orator. Ambros. Epist. ii. in Symmachum.

(3) Offic. c. 15. c. 28.

nobler ends of beneficence; and, no doubt, in that mediation of the church between mankind and the miseries of slavery, which was one of her most constant and useful ministrations during the darker period of human society, the example and authority of Ambrose perpetually encouraged the generosity of the more liberal, and repressed the narrow view of those who considered the consecrated treasures of the church inviolable, even for these more sacred objects (1).

The ecclesiastical zeal of Ambrose, like that of Chrysostom, scorned the limits of his own diocese. The see of Sirmium was vacant; Ambrose appeared in that city to prevent the election of an Arian, and to secure the appointment of an orthodox bishop. The strength of the opposite party lay in the zeal and influence of the Empress Justinia. Ambrose defied both, and made himself a powerful and irreconcilable enemy. A. D. 379.

But, for a time, Justinia was constrained to suppress her resentment. In a few years, Ambrose appears in a new position for a Christian bishop, as the mediator between rival competitors for the empire. The ambassador sent to Maximus (who had assumed the purple in Gaul, and, after the murder of Gratian, might be reasonably suspected of hostile designs on Italy), was no distinguished warrior, or influential civilian; the difficult negotiation was forced upon the bishop of Milan. The character and weight of Ambrose appeared the best protection of the young Valentinian. Ambrose is said to have refused to communicate with Maximus, the murderer of his sovereign. The interests of his earthly monarch or of the empire would not induce him to sacrifice for an instant those of his heavenly Master; he would have no fellowship with the man of blood (2). Yet so completely, either by his ability as a negotiator, or his dignity and sanctity as a prelate, did he overawe the usurper, as to avert the evils of war, and to arrest the hostile invasion of his diocese and of Italy. He succeeded in establishing peace. A. D. 383.

But the gratitude of Justinia for this essential service could not avert the collision of hostile religious creeds. The Empress demanded one of the churches in Milan for the celebration of the Arian service. The first and more modest request named the Porcian Basilica without the gates, but these demands rose to the new and largest edifice within the walls (3). The answer of Ambrose was firm and distinct; it asserted the inviolability of all property in the possession of the church—"A bishop cannot alienate that which is dedicated to God." After some fruitless negotiation, the officers of the Emperor proceeded to take possession of the Porcian Basilica. Where these buildings had belonged to the state, the Emperor

Dispute  
with the  
Empress  
Justinia.

(1) Even Fleury argues that these could not be consecrated vessels.

(2) The seventeenth Epistle of Ambrose relates the whole transaction, p. 852.

(3) Paul. Vit. Ambrose. Ambros. Epist. xx.

might still, perhaps, assert the right of property. Tumults arose : an Arian priest was severely handled, and only rescued from the hands of the populace by the influence of Ambrose. Many wealthy persons were thrown into prison by the government, and heavy fines exacted on account of these seditions. But the inflexible Ambrose persisted in his refusal to acknowledge the imperial authority over things dedicated to God. When he was commanded to allay the populace, "it is in my power," he answered, "to refrain from exciting their violence, but it is for God to appease it when excited (1). The soldiers surrounded the building; they threatened to violate the sanctity of the church, in which Ambrose was performing the usual solemnities. The bishop calmly continued his functions, and his undisturbed countenance seemed as if his whole mind was absorbed in its devotion. The soldiers entered the church; the affrighted females began to fly; but the rude and armed men fell on their knees and assured Ambrose that they came to pray and not to fight (2). Ambrose ascended the pulpit; his sermon was on the Book of Job; he enlarged on the conduct of the wife of the patriarch, who commanded him to blaspheme God; he compared the Empress with this example of impiety; he went on to compare her with Eve, with Jezebel, with Herodias. "The Emperor demands a church—what has the Emperor to do with the adulteress, the church of the heretics?" Intelligence arrived that the populace were tearing down the hangings of the church, on which was the sacred image of the sovereign, and which had been suspended in the Porcian Basilica, as a sign that the church had been taken into the possession of the Emperor. Ambrose sent some of his priests to allay the tumult, but went not himself. He looked triumphantly around on his armed devotees : "The Gentiles have entered into the inheritance of the Lord, but the armed Gentiles have become Christians, and co-heirs of God. My enemies are now my defenders."

A confidential secretary of the Emperor appeared, not to expel or degrade the refractory prelate, but to deprecate his *tyranny*. "Why do ye hesitate to strike down *the tyrant*," replied Ambrose, "my only defence is in my power of exposing my life for the honour of God." He proceeded with proud humility, "Under the ancient law, priests have bestowed, they have not condescended to assume empire; kings have desired the priesthood, rather than priests the royal power." He appealed to his influence over Maximus, which had averted the invasion of Italy. The imperial authority quailed before the resolute prelate; the soldiers were with-

The Emperor yields to Ambrose.

(1) *Referebam in meo jure esse, ut non excitarem, in Dei manu, uti mitigaret.*

(2) It would be curious if we could ascertain the different constitution of the troops employed in the irreverent scenes in the churches of

Alexandria and Constantinople, and here at Milan. Were the one raised from the vicious population of the Eastern cities, the other partly composed of barbarians? How much is justly to be attributed to the character of the prelate?



drawn, the prisoners released, and the fines annulled (1). When the Emperor himself was urged to confront Ambrose in the church, the timid or prudent youth replied, "His eloquence would compel yourselves to lay me bound hand and foot before his throne." To such a height had the sacerdotal power attained in the West, when wielded by a man of the energy and determination of Ambrose (2).

But the pertinacious animosity of the Empress was not yet exhausted. A law was passed authorising the assemblies of the Arians. A second struggle took place; a new triumph for Ambrose; a new defeat for the imperial power. From his inviolable citadel, his church, Ambrose uttered in courageous security his defiance. An emphatic sentence expressed the prelate's notion of the relation of the civil and religious power, and proclaimed the subordination of the Emperor within the mysterious circle of sacerdotal authority—"The Emperor is of the church, and in the church, but not above the church."

Was it to be supposed that the remonstrances of expiring Paganism would make any impression upon a court thus under subjection to one, who, by exercising the office of protector in the time of peril, assumed the right to dictate on subjects which appeared more completely within his sphere of jurisdiction? If Arianism in the person of the Empress was compelled to bow, Paganism could scarcely hope to obtain even a patient hearing.

We have already related the contest between expiring Polytheism and ascendant Christianity in the persons of Symmachus and of Ambrose. The more polished periods and the gentle dignity of Symmachus might delight the old aristocracy of Rome. But the full flow of the more vehement eloquence of Ambrose, falling into the current of popular opinion at Milan, swept all before it (3). By this time the Old Testament language and sentiment with regard to idolatry were completely incorporated with the Christian feeling; and when Ambrose enforced on a Christian Emperor the sacred duty of intolerance against opinions and practices, which scarcely a century before had been the established religion of the

(1) *Certatim hoc nuntiare milites, irruentes in altaria, osculis significare pacis insigne.* Ambrose perceived that God had stricken Lucifer, the great Dragon (*vermem antelucanum*).

(2) Ambrose relates that one of the officers of the court, more daring than the rest, presumed to resent this outrage, as he considered it, on the Emperor "While I live, dost thou thus treat Valentinian with contempt? I will strike off thy head." Ambrose replied, "God grant that thou mayest fulfil thy menace. I shall suffer the fate of a bishop; thou wilt do the act of an eunuch" (*tu facies, quod spadones*).

(3) The most curious fact relating to Ambrose, is the extraordinary contrast between his vigorous, practical, and statesmanlike character as a man, as well as that of such among his writ-

tings, as may be called public and popular, and the mystic subtlety which fills most of his theological works. He treats the Scriptures as one vast allegory, and propounds his own fanciful interpretation, or corollaries, with as much authority as if they were the plain sense of the sacred writer. No retired schoolman follows out the fantastic analogies and recondite significations which he perceives in almost every word, with the vain ingenuity of Ambrose; every word or number reminds him of every other place in the Scripture in which the same word or number occurs; and stringing them together with this loose connection, he works out some latent mystic signification, which he would suppose to have been within the intention of the inspired writer. See particularly the *Hexameron*.

of Theodosius, instead of obscuring the rival pretensions of the Church to power and influence seemed to confirm and strengthen them. That such a mind as that of Theodosius should submit with humility to ecclesiastical remonstrance and discipline tended no doubt, beyond all other events, to overawe mankind. Everywhere else throughout the Roman world, the state, and even the Church, bowed at the feet of Theodosius; in Milan alone, in the height of his power, he was confronted and subdued by the more commanding mind and religious majesty of Ambrose. His justice as well as his dignity quailed beneath the ascendancy of the prelate. A Synagogue of the Jews at Callinicum, in Osroene, had been burned by the Christians, it was said, at the instigation, if not under the actual sanction, of the Bishop. The church of the Valentinian Gnostics had likewise been destroyed and plundered by the zeal of some monks. Theodosius commanded the restoration of the synagogue at the expense of the Christians, and a fair compensation to the heretical Valentinians for their losses.

Jewish  
synagogue  
destroyed.

The pious indignation of Ambrose was not restrained either by the remoteness of these transactions from the scene of his own labours, or by the undeniable violence of the Christian party. He stood forward, designated, it might seem, by his situation and character, as the acknowledged champion of the whole of Christianity; the sacerdotal power was embodied in his person. In a letter to the Emperor, he boldly vindicated the Bishop; he declared himself, as far as his approbation could make him so, an accomplice in the glorious and holy crime. If Martyrdom was the consequence, he claimed the honour of that martyrdom; he declared it to be utterly irreconcilable with Christianity, that it should in any way contribute to the restoration of Jewish or heretical worship (1). If the Bishop should comply with the mandate, he would be an apostate, and the Emperor would be answerable for his apostasy. This act was but a slight and insufficient retaliation for the deeds of plunder and destruction perpetrated by the Jews and heretics against orthodox Christians. The letter of Ambrose did not produce the desired effect; but the bishop renewed his address in public in the church, and at length extorted from the Emperor the impunity of the offenders. Then, and not till then, he condescended to approach the altar, and to proceed with the service of God.

Conduct  
of Am-  
brose.

Ambrose felt his strength; he feared not to assert that superiority

(1) Hac propositâ conditione, puto dicturum episcopum, quod ipse ignes sparserit, turbas compulerit, populos concluserit, ne amittat occasionem martyrii. ut pro invalidis subiciat validiorem. O beatum mendacium quo acquiritur sibi aliorum absolutio, sui gratia. Hoc est, Imperator, quod poposci et ego, ut in me magis vindicare, et hoc si crimen putares mihi adseri-

beres. Quid mandas in absentes iudicium? Habes presentem, habes consentientem reum. Proclamo, quod ego synagogam incenderim, certè quod ego illis mandaverim, ne esset locus, in quo Christus negaretur. Si obijciatur mihi, cur hic non incenderim? Divino jam cepit cremari iudicio; meum cessavit opus. Epist. xxiv. p. 561.

of the altar over the throne which was a fundamental maxim of his Christianity. There is no reason to ascribe to ostentation, or to sacerdotal ambition, rather than to the profound conviction of his mind, the dignity which he vindicated for the priesthood, the authority supreme and without appeal in all things which related to the ceremonial of religion. Theodosius endured, and the people applauded, his public exclusion of the Emperor from within the impassable rails, which fenced off the officiating priesthood from the profane laity. An exemption had usually been made for the sacred person of the Emperor, and, according to this usage, Theodosius ventured within the forbidden precincts. Ambrose, with lofty courtesy, pointed to the seat or throne reserved for the Emperor, at the head of the laity. Theodosius submitted to the rebuke, and withdrew to the lowlier station.

But if these acts of Ambrose might to some appear unwise or unwarrantable aggressions on the dignity of the civil magistrate; or if to the prophetic sagacity of others they might foreshow the growth of an enormous and irresponsible authority, and awaken well grounded apprehension or jealousy, the Roman world could not withhold its admiration from another act of the Milanese prelate: it could not but hail the appearance of a new moral power, enlisted on the side of humanity and justice; a power which could bow the loftiest, as well as the meanest, under its dominion. For the first time since the establishment of the imperial despotism, the voice of a subject was heard in deliberate, public, and authoritative condemnation of a deed of atrocious tyranny, and sanguinary vengeance; for the first time, an Emperor of Rome trembled before public opinion, and humbled himself to a contrite confession of guilt and cruelty.

With all his wisdom and virtue, Theodosius was liable to paroxysms of furious and ungovernable anger. A dispute had arisen in Thessalonica about a favourite charioteer in the circus; out of the dispute a sedition, in which some lives were lost. The imperial officers, who interfered to suppress the fray, were wounded or slain, and Botheric, the representative of the Emperor, treated with indignity. Notwithstanding every attempt on the part of the clergy to allay the furious resentment of Theodosius, the counsels of the more violent advisers prevailed. Secret orders were issued; the circus, filled with the whole population of the city, was surrounded by troops, and a general and indiscriminate massacre of all ages and sexes, the guilty and the innocent, revenged the insult on the imperial dignity. Seven thousand lives were sacrificed in this remorseless carnage.

Massacre  
of Thessa-  
lonica.  
A. D. 390.

On the first intelligence of this atrocity, Ambrose, with prudent self-command, kept aloof from the exasperated Emperor. He retired into the country, and a letter from his own hand was deli-



of Theodosius, instead of obscuring the rival pretensions of the Church to power and influence seemed to confirm and strengthen them. That such a mind as that of Theodosius should submit with humility to ecclesiastical remonstrance and discipline tended no doubt, beyond all other events, to overawe mankind. Everywhere else throughout the Roman world, the state, and even the Church, bowed at the feet of Theodosius; in Milan alone, in the height of his power, he was confronted and subdued by the more commanding mind and religious majesty of Ambrose. His justice as well as his dignity quailed beneath the ascendancy of the prelate. A Synagogue of the Jews at Callinicum, in Osroene, had been burned by the Christians, it was said, at the instigation, if not under the actual sanction, of the Bishop. The church of the Valentinian Gnostics had likewise been destroyed and plundered by the zeal of some monks. Theodosius commanded the restoration of the synagogue at the expense of the Christians, and a fair compensation to the heretical Valentinians for their losses.

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of the altar over the throne which was a fundamental maxim of his Christianity. There is no reason to ascribe to ostentation, or to sacerdotal ambition, rather than to the profound conviction of his mind, the dignity which he vindicated for the priesthood, the authority supreme and without appeal in all things which related to the ceremonial of religion. Theodosius endured, and the people applauded, his public exclusion of the Emperor from within the impassable rails, which fenced off the officiating priesthood from the profane laity. An exemption had usually been made for the sacred person of the Emperor, and, according to this usage, Theodosius ventured within the forbidden precincts. Ambrose, with lofty courtesy, pointed to the seat or throne reserved for the Emperor, at the head of the laity. Theodosius submitted to the rebuke, and withdrew to the lowlier station.

But if these acts of Ambrose might to some appear unwise or unwarrantable aggressions on the dignity of the civil magistrate; or if to the prophetic sagacity of others they might foreshow the growth of an enormous and irresponsible authority, and awaken well grounded apprehension or jealousy, the Roman world could not withhold its admiration from another act of the Milanese prelate: it could not but hail the appearance of a new moral power, enlisted on the side of humanity and justice; a power which could bow the loftiest, as well as the meanest, under its dominion. For the first time since the establishment of the imperial despotism, the voice of a subject was heard in deliberate, public, and authoritative condemnation of a deed of atrocious tyranny, and sanguinary vengeance; for the first time, an Emperor of Rome trembled before public opinion, and humbled himself to a contrite confession of guilt and cruelty.

With all his wisdom and virtue, Theodosius was liable to paroxysms of furious and ungovernable anger. A dispute had arisen in Thessalonica about a favourite charioteer in the circus; out of the dispute a sedition, in which some lives were lost. The imperial officers, who interfered to suppress the fray, were wounded or slain, and Botheric, the representative of the Emperor, treated with indignity. Notwithstanding every attempt on the part of the clergy to allay the furious resentment of Theodosius, the counsels of the more violent advisers prevailed. Secret orders were issued; the circus, filled with the whole population of the city, was surrounded by troops, and a general and indiscriminate massacre of all ages and sexes, the guilty and the innocent, revenged the insult on the imperial dignity. Seven thousand lives were sacrificed in this remorseless carnage.

Massacre  
of Thessa-  
lonica.  
A. D. 390

On the first intelligence of this atrocity, Ambrose, with prudent self-command, kept aloof from the exasperated Emperor. He retired into the country, and a letter from his own hand was deli-

vered to the sovereign. The letter expressed the horror of Ambrose and his brother bishops at this inhuman deed, in which he should consider himself an accomplice if he could refrain from expressing his detestation of its guilt; if he should not refuse to communicate with a man stained with the innocent blood, not of one, but of thousands. He exhorts him to penitence; he promises his prayers in his behalf. He acted up to his declaration; the Emperor of the world found the doors of the church closed against him. For eight months he endured this ignominious exclusion. Even on the sacred day of the Nativity, he implored in vain to be admitted within those precincts which were open to the slave and to the beggar; those precincts which were the vestibule to heaven, for through the church alone was heaven to be approached. Submission and remonstrance were alike in vain; to an urgent minister of the sovereign, Ambrose calmly replied, that the Emperor might kill him, and pass over his body into the sanctuary.

At length Ambrose consented to admit the Emperor to an audience; with difficulty he was persuaded to permit him to enter, not into the church itself, but into the outer porch, the place of the public penitents. At length the interdict was removed on two conditions; that the Emperor should issue an edict prohibiting the execution of capital punishments for thirty days after conviction, and that he should submit to public penance. Stripped of his imperial ornaments, prostrate on the pavement, beating his breast, tearing his hair, watering the ground with his tears, the master of the Roman empire, the conqueror in so many victories, the legislator of the world, at length received the hard wrung absolution.

This was the culminating point of pure Christian influence. Christianity appeared before the world as the champion and vindicator of outraged humanity; as having founded a tribunal of justice, which extended its protective authority over the meanest, and suspended its retributive penalties over the mightiest of mankind.

Nearly at the same time (about four years before) had been revealed the latent danger from this new unlimited sovereignty over the human mind. *The first blood was judicially shed for religious opinion.* Far however from apprehending the fatal consequences which might arise out of their own exclusive and intolerant sentiments, or foreseeing that the sacerdotal authority, which they fondly and sincerely supposed they were strengthening for the unalloyed welfare of mankind, would seize and wield the sword of persecution with such remorseless and unscrupulous severity, this first fatal libation of Christian blood, which was the act of an usurping Emperor, and a few foreign bishops, was solemnly disclaimed by all the more influential dignitaries of the Western Church.

Priscillian, a noble and eloquent Spaniard, had embraced some Manichean or rather Gnostic opinions. The same contradictory

First capital punishment for religion.  
A. D. 385.

Priscillian and his followers.



accusations of the severest asceticism and of licentious habits, which were so perpetually adduced against the Manicheans, formed the chief charge against Priscillian and his followers. The leaders of the sect had taken refuge, from the persecutions of their countrymen, in Gaul, and propagated their opinions to some extent in Aquitaine. They were pursued with unwearied animosity by the Spanish Bishops Ithacius and Idacius. Maximus, the usurping Emperor of Gaul, who then resided at Treves, took cognisance of the case. In vain the celebrated Martin of Tours, whose life was almost an unwearied campaign against idolatry, and whose unrelenting hand had demolished every religious edifice within his reach; a prelate whose dread of heresy was almost as sensitive as of Paganism, urged his protest against these proceedings with all the vehemence of his character. During his absence, a capital sentence was extorted from the Emperor; Priscillian and some of his followers were put to death by the civil authority for the crime of religious error. The fatal precedent was disowned by the general voice of Christianity. It required another considerable period of ignorance and bigotry to deaden the fine moral sense of Christianity to the total abandonment of its spirit of love. When Ambrose reproached the usurper with the murder of his sovereign, Gratian, he reminded him likewise of the unjust execution of the Priscillianists; he refused to communicate with the bishops who had any concern in that sanguinary and unchristian transaction (1).

Martin of  
Tours.

Conduct of  
Ambrose.

Ambrose witnessed and lamented the death of the young Valentinian, over whom he pronounced a funeral oration. On the usurpation of the Pagan Eugenius, he fled from Milan, but returned to behold and to applaud the triumph of Theodosius. The conquering Emperor gave a new proof of his homage to Christianity and to its representative. Under the influence of Ambrose, he refrained for a time from communicating in the Christian mysteries, because his hands were stained with blood, though that blood had been shed in a just and necessary war (2). To Ambrose the dying Emperor commended his sons, and the Bishop of Milan pronounced the funeral oration over the last great Emperor of the world.

A. D. 392.  
Death of  
Valentinian.  
A. D. 393.

Death of  
Theodosius.  
A. D. 395.

He did not long survive his imperial friend. It is related that, when Ambrose was on his deathbed, Stilicho, apprehending the loss of such a man to Italy and to Christendom, urged the principal inhabitants of Milan to entreat the effective prayers of the bishop for his own recovery. "I have not so lived among you," replied Ambrose, "as to be ashamed to live; I have so good a Master, that I am not afraid to die." Ambrose expired in the attitude and in the act of prayer.

Death of  
Ambrosius.  
A. D. 397.

(1) Ambros. Epist. xxiv. The whole transaction in Sulpicius Sever. E. H. and Life of St. Martin.

(2) Oratio de Obitu Theodos. 34.

While Ambrose was thus assuming an unprecedented supremacy over his own age, and deepening and strengthening the foundation of the ecclesiastical power, Augustine was beginning gradually to consummate that total change in human opinion which was to influence the Christianity of the remotest ages.

Augustine.

Of all Christian writers since the Apostles, Augustine has maintained the most permanent and extensive influence. That influence, indeed, was unfelt, or scarcely felt, in the East; but as the East gradually became more estranged, till it was little more than a blank in Christian history, the dominion of Augustine over the opinions of the Western world was eventually over the whole of Christendom. Basil and Chrysostom spoke a language foreign or dead to the greater part of the Christian world. The Greek empire, after the reign of Justinian, gradually contracting its limits and sinking into abject superstition, forgot its own great writers on the more momentous subjects of religion and morality, for new controversialists on frivolous and insignificant points of difference. The more important feuds, as of Nestorianism made little progress in the West; the West repudiated almost with one voice the iconoclastic opinions; and at length Mohammedanism swept away its fairest provinces, and limited the Greek church to a still narrowing circle. The Latin language thus became almost that of Christianity; Latin writers the sole authority to which men appealed, or from which they imperceptibly imbibed the tone of religious doctrine or sentiment. Of these, Augustine was the most universal; the most commanding, the most influential.

The earliest Christian writers had not been able or willing altogether to decline some of the more obvious and prominent points of the Augustinian theology; but in his works they were first wrought up into a regular system. Abstruse topics, which had been but slightly touched, or dimly hinted in the Apostolic writings, and of which the older creeds had been entirely silent, became the prominent and unavoidable tenets of Christian doctrine. Augustinianism has constantly revived, in all its strongest and most peremptory statements, in every period of religious excitement. In later days, it formed much of the doctrinal system of Luther; it was worked up into a still more rigid and uncompromising system by the severe intellect of Calvin; it was remoulded into the Roman Catholic doctrine by Jansenius; the popular theology of most of the Protestant sects is but a modified Augustinianism.

Augustinian theology.

Christianity had now accomplished its divine mission, so far as impregnating the Roman world with its first principles, the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, and future retribution. These vital questions between the Old Paganism and the new religion had been decided by their almost general adoption into the common sentiments of mankind. And now questions naturally and necessarily

arising out of the providential government of that supreme Deity, out of that conscious immortality, and out of that acknowledged retribution, had begun profoundly to agitate the human heart. The nature of man had been stirred in its inmost depths. The hopes and fears, now centered on another state of being, were ever restlessly hovering over the abyss into which they were forced to gaze. As men were not merely convinced, but deeply penetrated, with the belief that they had souls to be saved, the means, the process, the degree of attainable assurance concerning salvation, became subjects of anxious inquiry. Every kind of information on these momentous topics was demanded with importunity, and hailed with eagerness. With the ancient philosophy, the moral condition of man was a much simpler and calmer subject of consideration. It could coldly analyse every emotion, trace the workings of every passion, and present its results; if in eloquent language, kindling the mind of the hearer, rather by that language, than by the excitement of the inquiry. It was the attractive form of the philosophy, the adventitious emotion produced by bold paradox, happy invention, acute dialectics, which amused and partially enlightened the inquisitive mind. But now mingled up with religion, every sensation, every feeling, every propensity, every thought, had become not merely a symptom of the moral condition, but an element in that state of spiritual advancement or deterioration which was to be weighed and examined in the day of judgment. The ultimate and avowed object of philosophy, the *summum bonum*, the greatest attainable happiness, shrunk into an unimportant consideration. These were questions of spiritual life and death, and the solution was therefore embraced rather by the will and the passions, than by the cool and sober reason. The solution of these difficulties was the more acceptable in proportion as it was peremptory and dogmatic; any thing could be endured rather than uncertainty, and Augustine himself was, doubtless, urged more by the desire of peace to his own anxious spirit than by the ambition of dictating to Christianity on these abstruse topics. The influence of Augustine thus concentrated the Christian mind on subjects to which Christianity led, but did not answer with fulness or precision. The Gospels and Apostolic writings paused within the border of attainable human knowledge; Augustine fearlessly rushed forward, or was driven by his antagonists; and partly from the reasonings of a new religious philosophy, partly by general inferences from limited and particular phrases in the sacred writings, framed a complete, it must be acknowledged, and as far as its own consistency, an harmonious system; but of which it was the inevitable tendency to give an overpowering importance to problems on which Christianity, wisely measuring, it should seem, the capacity of the human mind, had declined to utter any final or authoritative decrees. Almost up to



this period in Christian history (1), on these mysterious topics, all was unquestioned and undefined; and though they could not but cross the path of Christian reasoning,—could not but be incidentally noticed, they had, as yet, undergone no full or direct investigation. Nothing but the calmest and firmest philosophy could have avoided or eluded these points, on which, though the human mind could not attain to knowledge, it was impatient of ignorance. The immediate or more remote, the direct or indirect, the sensible or the imperceptible, influence of the divine agency (grace) on the human soul, with the inseparable consequences of necessity and free-will, thus became the absorbing and agitating points of Christian doctrine. From many causes, these inevitable questions had forced themselves, at this period, on the general attention; Manicheism on one hand, Pelagianism on the other, stirred up their darkest depths. The Christian mind demanded on all these topics at once excitement and rest. Nothing could be more acceptable than the unhesitating and peremptory decisions of Augustine; and his profound piety ministered perpetual emotion; his glowing and perspicuous language, his confident dogmatism, and the apparent completeness of his system, offered repose.

But the primary principle of the Augustinian theology was already deeply rooted in the awe-struck piety of the Christian world. In this state of the general mind, that which brought the Deity more directly and more perpetually in contact with the soul, at once enlisted all minds which were under the shadow of religious fears, or softened by any milder religious feeling. It was not a remote supremacy, a government through unseen and untraceable influences, a general reverential trust in the divine protection, which gave satisfaction to the agitated spirit; but an actually felt and immediate presence, operating on each particular and most minute part of the creation; not a regular and unvarying emanation of the divine will, but a special and peculiar intervention in each separate case. The whole course of human events, and the moral condition of each individual, were alike under the acknowledged, or conscious and direct, operation of the Deity. But the more distinct and unquestioned this principle, the more the problem which in a different form had agitated the Eastern world, — the origin of evil, — forced itself on the consideration. There it had taken a kind of speculative or theogonical turn, and allied itself with physical notions; here it became a moral and practical, and almost every-day question, involving the prescience of God and the freedom of the human soul. Augustine had rejected Manicheism; the antagonist and equally conflicting powers of that system had offended his high conception of the supremacy of God. Still his earlier Manicheism

(1) In the *Historia Pelagiana* of Vossius may be found quotations expressive of the sentiments of the earlier Fathers on many of these points.

lent an unconscious colouring to his maturer opinions. In another form, he divided the world into regions of cloudless light and total darkness. But he did not mingle the Deity in any way in the darkness which enveloped the whole of mankind, a chosen portion of which alone were rescued, by the gracious intervention of the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit. The rest were separated by an insuperable barrier, that of hereditary evil; they bore within, the fatal and inevitable proscription. Within the pale of Election was the world of Light, without, the world of Perdition; and the human soul was so reduced to a subordinate agent before the mysterious and inscrutable power, which, by the infusion of faith, rescued it from its inveterate hereditary propensity, as to become entirely passive, altogether annihilated, in overleaping the profound though narrow gulph, which divided the two kingdoms of Grace and of Perdition.

Thus that system which assigned the most unbounded and universal influence to the Deity was seized upon by devout piety as the truth which it would be an impious limitation of Omnipotence to question. Man offered his free agency on the altar of his religion, and forgot that he thereby degraded the most wonderful work of Omnipotence, a being endowed with free agency. While the internal consciousness was not received as sufficient evidence of the freedom of the will, it was considered as unquestionable testimony to the operations of divine grace.

At all events, these questions now became unavoidable articles of the Christian faith; from this time the simpler Apostolic Creed, and the splendid amplifications of the divine attributes of the Trinity, were enlarged, if not by stern definitions, by dictatorial axioms on original sin, on grace, predestination, the total depravity of mankind, election to everlasting life, and final reprobation. To the applications which awoke what was considered righteous and legitimate hatred in all true believers, Arianism and Manicheism, was now added as a term of equal obloquy,—Pelagianism (1).

(1) The doctrines of Pelagius have been represented as arising out of the monastic spirit, or at least out of one form of its influence. The high idea of moral perfection which the monk set before himself, the conscious strength of will which was necessary to aspire to that height, the proud impatience and disdain of the ordinary excuse for infirmity, the inherited weakness and depravity of human nature, induced the colder and more severe Pelagius to embrace his peculiar tenets, the rejection of original sin; the assertion of the entire freedom of the will; the denial or limitation of the influence of divine grace. Of the personal history of Pelagius little is known, except that he was a British or French monk (his name is said, in one tradition, to have been Morgan), but neither he nor his colleague Cælestius appears to have been a secluded ascetic; they dwelt in Rome for some time, where they propagated their doctrines. Of his character perhaps still less is known, unless from his tenets,

and some fragments of his writings, preserved by his adversaries; excepting that the blamelessness of his manners is admitted by his adversaries (the term *egregie Christianus* is the expression of St. Augustine); and even the violent Jerome bears testimony to his innocence of life.

But the tenets of Augustine appear to flow more directly from the monastic system. His doctrines (in his controversy with Pelagius, for in his other writings he holds another tone) are tinged with the Encratite or Manichean notion, that there was a *physical* transmission of sin in the propagation of children, even in lawful marriage. (See, among other writers, Jer. Taylor's *Vindication of his Deus Justificatus*.) Even this *concupiscentia carnis peccatum est, quia inest illi inobedientia contra dominatum mentis*. De Pecc. Romis, i. 3. This is the old doctrine of the inherent evil of matter. We are astonished that Augustine, who had been a father, and a fond

Augustine, by the extraordinary adaptation of his genius to his own age, the comprehensive grandeur of his views, the intense earnestness of his character, his inexhaustible activity, the vigour, warmth, and perspicuity of his style, had a right to command the homage of Western Christendom. He was at once the first universal, and the purest and most powerful of the Latin Christian writers. It is singular that almost all the earlier Christian authors in the West were provincials, chiefly of Africa. But the works of Tertullian were, in general, brief treatises on temporary subjects of controversy; if enlivened by the natural vehemence and strength of the man, disfigured by the worst barbarisms of style. The writings of Cyprian were chiefly short epistles or treatises on subjects of immediate or local interest. Augustine retained the fervour and energy of the African style with much purer and more perspicuous Latinity. His ardent imagination was tempered by reasoning powers which boldly grappled with every subject. He possessed and was unembarrassed by the possession of all the knowledge which had been accumulated in the Roman world. He commanded the whole range of Latin literature, and perhaps his influence over his own hemisphere was not diminished by his ignorance, or at best imperfect and late-acquired acquaintance with Greek (1). But all his knowledge and all his acquirements fell into the train of his absorbing religious sentiments or passions. On the subjects with which he was conversant, a calm and dispassionate philosophy would have been indignantly repudiated by the Christian mind, and Augustine's temperament was too much in harmony with that of the time to offend by deficiency in fervour. It was profound religious agitation, not cold and abstract truth, which the age required; the emotions of piety, rather than the convictions of severe logical inquiry; and in Augustine, the depth or abstruseness of the matter never extinguished or allayed the passion, or in one sense, the popularity, of his style. At different periods of his life, Augustine aspired to and succeeded in entralling all the various

father, though of an illegitimate son, could be driven by the stern logic of polemics to the damnation of unbaptized infants, a milder damnation, it is true, to eternal fire. This was the more genuine doctrine of men in whose hearts all the sweet charities of life had been long seared up by monastic discipline; men like Fulgentius, to whom the title of saint is prefixed, and who lays down this benignant and Christian axiom: "*Firmissimè tene et nullatenus dubites, parvulos, sive in utero matrum vivere incipiunt, et ibi moriuntur, sive cum de matribus nati, sine sacramento sancto baptismatis de hoc seculo trans-eunt, ignis æterni sempiterno supplicio puniendos.*" Fulgentius de Fide, quoted in Vossius, Hist. Pelag., p. 257.

The assertion of the entire freedom of the will, and the restricted sense in which Pelagius appears to have received the doctrine of divine grace, confining it to the influences of the divine

revelation, appear to arise out of philosophical reasonings, rather than out of the monastic spirit. The severe monastic discipline was more likely to infuse the sense of the slavery of the will; and the brooding over the bodily and mental emotions, the general cause and result of the monastic spirit, would tend to exaggerate rather than to question or limit the actual, and even sensible workings of the divine spirit within the soul. The calmer temperament, indeed, and probably more peaceful religious development of Pelagius, may have disposed him to his system; as the more vehement character, and agitated religious life of Augustine, to his vindication, founded on his internal experience of the constant divine agency upon the heart and the soul.

(1) On St. Augustine's knowledge of Greek; compare Tillenont, in his Life, p. 7. Punic was still spoken by the common people in the neighbourhood of Carthage.



powers and faculties of the human mind. That life was the type of his theology; and as it passed through its various changes of age, of circumstance, and of opinion, it left its own impressions strongly and permanently stamped upon the whole Latin Christianity. The gentleness of his childhood, the passions of his youth, the studies of his adolescence, the wilder dreams of his immature Christianity, the Manicheism, the intermediate stage of Platonism, through which he passed into orthodoxy, the fervour with which he embraced, the vigour with which he developed, the unhesitating confidence with which he enforced his final creed — all affected more or less the general mind. His *Confessions* became the manual of all those who were forced by their temperament or inclined by their disposition to brood over inward sensations of their own minds; to trace within themselves all the trepidations, the misgivings, the agonies, the exultations of the religious conscience; the gradual formation of opinions till they harden into dogmas, or warm into objects of ardent passion. Since Augustine, this internal autobiography of the soul has always had the deepest interest for those of strong religious convictions; it was what multitudes had felt, but no one had yet embodied in words; it was the appalling yet attractive manner in which men beheld all the conflicts and adventures of their own spiritual life reflected with bold and speaking truth. Men shrunk from the divine and unapproachable image of Christian perfection in the life of the Redeemer, to the more earthly, more familiar picture of the development of the Christian character, crossed with the light and shade of human weakness and human passion.

The religious was more eventful than the civil life of St. Augustine. He was born A. D. 354, in Tagasta, an episcopal city of Numidia. His parents were Christians of respectable rank. In his childhood, he was attacked by a dangerous illness; he entreated to be baptized; his mother Monica took the alarm; all was prepared for that solemn ceremony; but on his recovery, it was deferred, and Augustine remained for some years in the humbler rank of catechumen. He received the best education, in grammar and rhetoric, which the neighbouring city of Madaura could afford. At seventeen, he was sent to Carthage to finish his studies. Augustine has, perhaps, highly coloured both the idleness of his period of study in Madaura, and the licentious habits to which he abandoned himself in the dissolute city of Carthage. His ardent mind plunged into the intoxicating enjoyments of the theatre, and his excited passions demanded every kind of gratification. He had a natural son, called by the somewhat inappropriate name *A-deo-datus*. He was first arrested in his sensual course, not by the solemn voice of religion, but by the gentler remonstrances of Pagan literature. He learned from Cicero, not from the Gospel, the higher

A. D. 371.

dignity of intellectual attainments. From his brilliant success in his studies, it is clear that his life, if yielding at times to the temptations of youth, was not a course of indolence or total abandonment to pleasure. It was the Hortensius of Cicero which awoke his mind to nobler aspirations, and the contempt of worldly enjoyments.

But philosophy could not satisfy the lofty desires which it had awakened : he panted for some better hopes, and more satisfactory objects of study. He turned to the religion of his parents but his mind was not subdued to a feeling for the inimitable beauty of the New Testament. Its simplicity of style appeared rude, after the stately march of Tully's eloquence. But Manicheism seized at once upon his kindled imagination. For nine years, from the age of nineteen to twenty-eight, the mind of Augustine wandered among the vague and fantastic reveries of Oriental theology. The virtuous and holy Monica, with the anxious apprehensions and prescient hopes of a mother's heart, watched over the irregular development of his powerful mind. Her distress at his Manichean errors was consoled by an aged bishop, who had himself been involved in the same opinions. "Be of good cheer, the child of so many tears cannot perish." The step against which she remonstrated most strongly, led to that result which she scarcely dared to hope. Augustine grew discontented with the wild Manichean doctrines, which neither satisfied the religious yearnings of his heart, nor the philosophical demands of his understanding. He was in danger of falling into a desperate Pyrrhonism, or at best the proud indifference of an Academic. He determined to seek a more distinguished sphere for his talents as a teacher of rhetoric ; and, notwithstanding his mother's tears, he left Carthage for Rome. The fame of his talents obtained him an invitation to teach at Milan. He was there within the magic circle of the great ecclesiastic of the West. But we cannot pause to trace the throes and pangs of his final conversion. The writings of St. Paul accomplished what the eloquence of Ambrose had begun. In one of the paroxysms of his religious agony, he seemed to hear a voice from heaven,—"Take and read, take and read." Till now he had rejected the writings of the Apostle ; he opened on the passage which contains the awful denunciations of Paul against the dissolute morals of the Heathen. The conscience of Augustine recognised "in the chambering and wantonness" the fearful picture of his own life ; for though he had abandoned the looser indulgences of his youth (he had lived in strict fidelity, not to a lawful wife indeed, but to a concubine) even his mother was anxious to disengage him, by an honourable marriage, from the bonds of a less legitimate connection. But he burst at once his thralldom ; shook his old nature from his heart ; renounced for ever all, even lawful indulgences, of the carnal desires ; forswore the

A. D. 382.  
A. D. 29.

A. D. 385.

world, and withdrew himself, though without exciting any unnecessary astonishment among his hearers, from his profaner function as teacher of rhetoric. His mother, who had followed him to Milan, lived to witness his baptism as a Catholic Christian, by the hands of Ambrose; and in all the serene happiness of her accomplished hopes and prayers, expired in his arms before his return to Africa. His son, Adeodatus, who died a few years afterwards, was baptized at the same time.

Baptism  
of August-  
inian.  
A. D. 387.

To return to the writings of St. Augustine, or rather to his life in his writings. In his controversial treatises against the Manicheans and against Pelagius, Augustine had the power of seemingly at least, bringing down those abstruse subjects to popular comprehension. His vehement and intrepid dogmatism hurried along the unresisting mind, which was allowed no pause for the sober examination of difficulties, or was awed into acquiescence by the still suspended charge of impiety. The imagination was at the same time kept awake by a rich vein of allegoric interpretation, dictated by the same bold decision, and enforced as necessary conclusions from the sacred writings, or latent truths intentionally wrapped up in those mysterious phrases.

Controver-  
sial writ-  
ings.

The City of God was unquestionably the noblest work, both in its original design and in the fulness of its elaborate execution, which the genius of man had as yet contributed to the support of Christianity. Hitherto the Apologies had been framed to meet particular exigences: they were either brief and pregnant statements of the Christian doctrines; refutations of prevalent calumnies; invectives against the follies and crimes of Paganism; or confutations of anti-Christian works, like those of Celsus, Porphyry, or Julian, closely following their course of argument, and rarely expanding into general and comprehensive views of the great conflict. The City of God, in the first place, indeed, was designed to decide for ever the one great question, which alone kept in suspense the balance between Paganism and Christianity, the connection between the fall of the empire and the miseries under which the whole Roman society was groaning, with the desertion of the ancient religion of Rome. Even this part of his theme led Augustine into a full, and, if not impartial, yet far more comprehensive survey of the whole religion and philosophy of antiquity, than had been yet displayed in any Christian work. It has preserved more on some branches of these subjects than the whole surviving Latin literature. The City of God was not merely a defence, it was likewise an exposition of Christian doctrine. The last twelve books developed the whole system with a regularity and copiousness, as far as we know, never before attempted by any Christian writer. It was the first complete Christian theology.

City of  
God.

The immediate occasion of this important work of Augustine was



A. D. 410.  
Occasion  
of its com-  
position.

worthy of this powerful concentration of his talents and knowledge. The capture of Rome by the Goths had appalled the whole empire. So long as the barbarians only broke through the frontiers, or severed province after province from the dominion of the Emperor, men could close their eyes to the gradual declension and decay of the Roman supremacy; and in the rapid alternations of power, the empire, under some new Cæsar or Constantine, might again throw back the barbaric inroads; or where the barbarians were settled within the frontiers, awe them into peaceful subjects, or array them as valiant defenders of their dominions. As long as both Romes, more especially the ancient city of the West, remained inviolate, so long the fabric of the Roman greatness seemed unbroken, and she might still assert her title as Mistress of the World. The capture of Rome dissipated for ever these proud illusions; it struck the Roman world to the heart; and in the mortal agony of the old social system, men wildly grasped at every cause which could account for this unexpected, this inexplicable, phenomenon. They were as much overwhelmed with dread and wonder as if there had been no previous omens of decay, no slow and progressive approach to the sacred walls; as if the fate of the city had not been already twice suspended by the lenity, the mercy, or the prudence of the conqueror. Murmurs were again heard impeaching the new religion as the cause of this disastrous consummation: the deserted gods had deserted in their turn the apostate city (1).

There seems no doubt that Pagan ceremonies took place in the hour of peril, to avert, if possible, the imminent ruin. The respect paid by the barbarians to the churches might, in the zealous or even the wavering votaries of Paganism, strengthen the feeling of some remote connection between the destroyer of the civil power and the destroyer of the ancient religions. The Roman aristocracy, which fled to different parts of the world, more particularly to the yet peaceful and uninvaded province of Africa; and among whom the feelings of attachment to the institutions and to the gods of Rome were still the strongest, were not likely to suppress the language of indignation and sorrow, or to refrain from the extenuation of their own cowardice and effeminacy, by ascribing the fate of the city to the irresistible power of the alienated deities.

A. D. 413  
to 426.

Augustine dedicated thirteen years to the completion of this work, which was for ever to determine this solemn question, and to silence the last murmurs of expiring Paganism. The City of God is at once the funeral oration of the ancient society, the gratulatory panegyric on the birth of the new. It acknowledged, it triumphed

(1) Orosius attempted the same theme: the Pagans, he asserts, "præsentia tantum tempora, veluti malis extra solitum infestissima, ob hoc solum, quod creditur Christus, et colitur, idola autem minus coluntur, infanant." Heyne has

well observed on this work of Orosius,—Excitaverat Augustini vibrantis arma exemplum Orosium, discipulum, ut et ipse arma sumeret, etsi imbellibus manibus. Opuscula, vi p. 130.

in the irrevocable fall of the Babylon of the West, the shrine of idolatry ; it hailed at the same time the universal dominion which awaited the new theocratic polity. The earthly city had undergone its predestined fate ; it had passed away with all its vices and superstitions, with all its virtues and its glories (for the soul of Augustine was not dead to the noble reminiscences of Roman greatness), with its false gods and its Heathen sacrifices : its doom was sealed, and for ever. But in its place had arisen the City of God, the Church of Christ ; a new social system had emerged from the ashes of the old ; that system was founded by God, was ruled by divine laws, and had the divine promise of perpetuity.

The first ten books are devoted to the question of the connection between the prosperity and the religion of Rome ; five to the influence of Paganism in this world ; five in that in the world to come. Augustine appeals in the five first to the mercy shown by the conqueror, as the triumph of Christianity. Had the *Pagan* Radagaisus taken Rome, not a life would have been spared, no place would have been sacred. The *Christian* Alaric had been checked and overawed by the sanctity of the Christian character, and his respect for his Christian brethren. He denies that worldly prosperity is an unerring sign of the divine favour ; he denies the exemption of the older Romans from disgrace and distress, and recapitulates the crimes and the calamities of their history during their worship of their ancient gods. He ascribes their former glory to their valour, their frugality, their contempt of wealth, their fortitude, and their domestic virtues ; he assigns their vices, their frightful profligacy of manners, their pride, their luxury, their effeminacy, as the proximate causes of their ruin. Even in their ruin they could not forget their dissolute amusements ; the theatres of Carthage were crowded with the fugitives from Rome. In the five following books he examines the pretensions of Heathenism to secure felicity in the world to come ; he dismisses with contempt the old popular religion, but seems to consider the philosophic Theism, the mystic Platonism of the later period, a worthier antagonist. He puts forth all his subtlety and power in refutation of these tenets.

The last twelve books place in contrast the origin, the pretensions, the fate, of the new city, that of God : he enters at large into the evidences of Christianity ; he describes the sanctifying effects of the faith ; but pours forth all the riches of his imagination and eloquence on the destinies of the church at the Resurrection. Augustine had no vision of the worldly power of the new city ; he foresaw not the spiritual empire of Rome which would replace the new fallen Rome of Heathenism. With him the triumph of Christianity is not complete till the world itself, not merely its outward framework of society and the constitution of its kingdoms, has experienced a total change. In the description of the final kingdom of Christ, he

treads his way with great dexterity and address between the grosser notions of the Millenarians, with their kingdom of earthly wealth, and power, and luxury (this he repudiates with devout abhorrence); and that finer and subtler spiritualism, which is ever approaching to Pantheism, and by the rejection of the bodily resurrection, renders the existence of the disembodied spirit too fine and impalpable for the general apprehension.

Life of Augustine.

The uneventful personal life of St. Augustine, at least, till towards its close, contrasts with that of Ambrose and Chrysostom. After the first throes and travail of his religious life, described with such dramatic fidelity in his Confessions, he subsided into a peaceful bishop in a remote and rather inconsiderable town (1). He had not, like Ambrose, to interpose between rival Emperors, or to rule the conscience of the universal sovereign; or like Chrysostom, to enter into a perilous conflict with the vices of a capital and the intrigues of a court. Forced by the devout admiration of the people to assume the episcopate in the city of Hippo, he was faithful to his first bride, his earliest, though humble see. Not that his life was that of contemplative inactivity, or tranquil exertion; his personal conferences with the leaders of the Donatists, the Manicheans, the Arians, and Pelagians, and his presence in the councils of Carthage, displayed his power of dealing with men. His letter to Count Boniface showed that he was not unconcerned with the public affairs, and his former connection with Boniface, who at one time had expressed his determination to embrace the monastic life, might warrant his remonstrance against the fatal revolt, which involved Boniface and Africa in ruin.

At the close of his comparatively peaceful life, Augustine was exposed to the trial of his severe and lofty principles; his faith and his superiority to the world were brought to the test in the fearful calamities which desolated the whole African province. No part of the empire had so long escaped; no part was so fearfully visited, as Africa by the invasion of the Vandals. The once prosperous and fruitful region presented to the view only ruined cities, burning villages, a population thinned by the sword, bowed to slavery, and exposed to every kind of torture and mutilation. With these fierce barbarians, the awful presence of Christianity imposed no respect. The churches were not exempt from the general ruin, the bishops and clergy from cruelty and death, the dedicated virgins from worse than death. In many places the services of religion entirely ceased from the extermination of the worshippers, or the flight of the priests. To Augustine, as the supreme authority in matters of faith or conduct, was submitted the grave question of the course to be pursued by the clergy; whether they were to seek their own se-

(1) He was thirty-five before he was ordained presbyter, A. D. 389; he was chosen coadjutor to the bishop of Hippo, A. D. 395.



curity, or to confront the sword of the ravager. The advice of Augustine was at once lofty and discreet. Where the flock remained, it was cowardice, it was impiety, in the clergy to desert them, and to deprive them in those disastrous times of the consolatory offices of religion, their children of baptism, themselves of the holy Eucharist. But where the priest was an especial object of persecution, and his place might be supplied by another; where the flock was massacred or dispersed, or had abandoned their homes, the clergy might follow them, and if possible provide for their own security.

Augustine did not fall below his own high notions of Christian, of episcopal duty. When the Vandal army gathered around Hippo, one of the few cities which still afforded a refuge for the persecuted provincials, he refused, though more than seventy years old, to abandon his post. In the third month of the siege he was released by death, and escaped the horrors of the capture, the cruelties of the conqueror, and the desolation of his church (1). A. D. 430.

## CHAPTER XI.

### JEROME.—THE MONASTIC SYSTEM.

THOUGH not so directly or magisterially dominant over the Christianity of the West, the influence of Jerome has been of scarcely less importance than that of Augustine. Jerome was the connecting link between the East and the West; through him, as it were, passed over into the Latin hemisphere of Christendom that which was still necessary for its permanence and independence during the succeeding ages. The time of separation approached, when the Eastern and Western empires, the Latin and the Greek languages; were to divide the world. Western Christianity was to form an entirely separate system; the different nations and kingdoms which were to arise out of the wreck of the Roman empire were to maintain, each its national church, but there was to be a permanent centre of unity in that of Rome, considered as the common parent and federal head of Western Christendom. But before this vast and silent revolution took place, certain preparations, in which Jerome was chiefly instrumental, gave strength, and harmony, and vitality to the religion of the West, from which the precious inheritance has been secured to modern Europe.

Jerome.

The two leading transactions in which Jerome took the effective part, were—1st, the introduction, or at least the general reception,

(1) In the life of Augustine I have chiefly consulted that prefixed to his works, and Tille-  
mont, with the passages in his Confessions and Epistles.

of Monachism in the West; 2d, the establishment of an authoritative and universally recognised version of the sacred writings into the Latin language. For both these important services, Jerome qualified himself by his visits to the East; he was probably the first occidental (though born in Dalmatia, he may be almost considered a Roman, having passed all his youth in that city) who became completely naturalised and domiciliated in Judæa; and his example, though it did not originate, strengthened to an extraordinary degree the passion for pilgrimages to the Holy Land; a sentiment in later times productive of such vast and unexpected results. In the earlier period, the repeated devastations of that devoted country, and still more its occupation by the Jews, had overpowered the natural veneration of the Christians for the scene of the life and sufferings of the Redeemer. It was an accursed rather than a holy region, desecrated by the presence of the murderers of the Lord, rather than endeared by the reminiscences of his personal ministry and expiatory death. The total ruin of the Jews, and their expulsion from Jerusalem by Hadrian; their dispersion into other lands, with the simultaneous progress of Christianity in Palestine, and their settlement in Ælia, the Roman Jerusalem, notwithstanding the profanation of that city by idolatrous emblems, allowed those more gentle and sacred feelings to grow up in strength and silence (1). Already, before the time of Jerome, pilgrims had flowed from all quarters of the world; and during his life, whoever had attained to any proficiency in religion, in Gaul, or in the secluded island of Britain, was eager to obtain a personal knowledge of these hallowed places. They were met by strangers from Armenia, Persia, India (the Southern Arabia), Æthiopia, the countless monks of Egypt, and from the whole of Western Asia (2). Yet Jerome was, no doubt, the most influential pilgrim to the Holy Land; the increasing and general desire to visit the soil printed, as it were, with the footsteps, and moist with the redeeming blood of the Saviour, may be traced to his writings, which opened as it were a constant and easy communication, and established an intercourse, more or less regularly maintained, between Western Europe and Palestine (3).

(1) Augustine asserts that the *whole world* flocked to Bethlehem to see the place of Christ's nativity, t. i. p. 561. Pilgrimages, according to him, were undertaken to Arabia to see the dung-heap on which Job sate, t. ii. p. 59. For 180 years, according to Jerome, from Hadrian to Constantine, the statue of Jupiter occupied the place of the resurrection, and a statue of Venus was worshipped on the *rock of Calvary*. But as the object of Hadrian was to insult the Jewish, not the Christian, religion, it seems not very credible that these two sites should be chosen for the Heathen temples. Hieronym. Oper. Epist. xlix. p. 505.

(2) Quicumque in Galliâ fuerat primus huc properat. Divisus ab orbe nostro Britannus, si

in religione processerit, occiduo sole dimisso, quarit locum famâ sibi tantum, et Scripturarum relatione cognitum. Quid referamus Armenios, quid Persas, quid Indios, quid Æthiopes populos, ipsamque juxta Ægyptum, fertilem monachorum, Pontum et Cappadociam, Syriam, Cretam, et Mesopotamiam cunctaque orientis examina. This is the letter of a *Roman* female, Paula. Hieronym. Oper. Epist. xlv. p. 551.

(3) See the glowing description of all the religious wonders in the Holy Land in the Epitaphium Paula. An epistle, however, of Gregory of Nyssen strongly remonstrates against pilgrimages to the Holy Land, even from Cappadocia. He urges the dangers and suspicions to which pious recluses, especially women, would be sub-

But besides this subordinate, if indeed subordinate, effect of Jerome's peculiar position between the East and West, he was thence both incited and enabled to accomplish his more immediately influential undertakings. In Palestine and in Egypt, Jerome became himself deeply imbued with the spirit of Monachism, and laboured with all his zeal to awaken the more tardy West to rival Egypt and Syria in displaying this sublime perfection of Christianity. By his letters, descriptive of the purity, the sanctity, the total estrangement from the deceitful world in these blessed retirements, he kindled the holy emulation, especially of the females, in Rome. Matrons and virgins of patrician families embraced with contagious fervour, the monastic life; and though the populous districts in the neighbourhood of the metropolis were not equally favourable for retreat, yet they attempted to practise the rigid observances of the desert in the midst of the busy metropolis.

For the second of his great achievements, the version of the sacred Scriptures, Jerome derived inestimable advantages, and acquired unprecedented authority, by his intercourse with the East. His residence in Palestine familiarised him with the language and peculiar habits of the sacred writers. He was the first Christian writer of note who thought it worth while to study Hebrew. Nor was it the language alone; the customs, the topography, the traditions, of Palestine were carefully collected, and applied by Jerome, if not always with the soundest judgment, yet occasionally with great felicity and success to the illustration of the sacred writings.

The influence of Monachism upon the manners, opinions, and general character of Christianity, as well as that of the Vulgate translation of the Bible, not only on the religion, but on the literature of Europe, appear to demand a more extensive investigation; and as Jerome, if not the representative, was the great propagator of Monachism in the West, and as about this time this form of Christianity overshadowed and dominated throughout the whole of Christendom, it will be a fit occasion, although we have in former parts of this work not been able altogether to avoid it, to develop more fully its origin and principles.

It is singular to see this oriental influence successively enslaving two religions in their origin and in their genius so totally opposite to Monachism as Christianity and the religion of Mohammed. Both

Monach-  
ism.

ject with male attendants, either strangers or friends, on a lonely road; the dissolute words and sights which may be unavoidable in the inns; the dangers of robbery and violence in the Holy Land itself, of the moral state of which he draws a fearful picture. He asserts the religious superiority of Cappadocia, which had more churches than any part of the world; and inquires, in plain terms, whether a man will believe the virgin birth of Christ the more by

seeing Bethlehem, or his resurrection by visiting his tomb, or his ascension by standing on the Mount of Olives. Greg. Nyss. de eunt. Hieros.

The authenticity of this epistle is indeed contested by Roman Catholic writers; but I can see no internal evidence against its genuineness. Jerome's more sober letter to Paulinus, Epist. xxix. vol. iv. p. 563., should also be compared.



gradually and unreluctantly yield to the slow and inevitable change. Christianity, with very slight authority from the precepts, and none from the practice of the Author and first teachers, admitted this without inquiry as the perfection and consummation of its own theory. Its advocates and their willing auditors equally forgot that if Christ and his apostles had retired into the desert, Christianity would never have spread beyond the wilderness of Judæa. The transformation which afterwards took place of the fierce Arab marauder, or the proselyte to the martial creed of the Koran, into a dreamy dervish, was hardly more violent and complete, than that of the disciple of the great example of Christian virtue, or of the active and popular Paul, into a solitary anchorite.

Cœnobit-  
ism.

Still that which might appear most adverse to the universal dissemination of Christianity eventually tended to its entire and permanent incorporation with the whole of society. When Eremitism gave place to Cœnobitism; when the hermitage grew up into a convent, the establishment of these religious fraternities in the wildest solitudes gathered round them a Christian community, or spread, as it were, a gradually increasing belt of Christian worship, which was maintained by the spiritual services of the monks, who, though not generally ordained as ecclesiastics, furnished a constant supply for ordination. In this manner, the rural districts, which, in most parts, long after Christianity had gained the predominance in the towns, remained attached by undisturbed habit to the ancient superstition, were slowly brought within the pale of the religion. The monastic communities commenced, in the more remote and less populous districts of the Roman world, that ameliorating change which, at later times, they carried on beyond the frontiers. As afterwards they introduced civilisation and Christianity among the barbarous tribes of North Germany or Poland, so now they continued in all parts a quiet but successful aggression on the lurking Paganism.

Origin of  
Monach-  
ism.

Monachism was the natural result of the incorporation of Christianity with the prevalent opinions of mankind, and in part of the state of profound excitement into which it had thrown the human mind. We have traced the universal predominance of the great principle, the inherent evil of matter. This primary tenet, as well of the Eastern religions as of the Platonism of the West, coincided with the somewhat ambiguous use of the term world in the sacred writings. Both were alike the irreclaimable domain of the Adversary of good. The importance assumed by the soul, now through Christianity become profoundly conscious of its immortality, tended to the same end. The deep and serious solicitude for the fate of that everlasting part of our being, the concentration of all its energies on its own individual welfare, withdrew it entirely within itself. A kind of sublime selfishness excluded all subordinate considera-

tions (1). The only security against the corruption which environed it on all sides seemed entire alienation from the contagion of matter; the constant mortification, the extinction, if possible, of those senses which were necessarily keeping up a dangerous and treasonable correspondence with the external universe. On the other hand, entire estrangement from the rest of mankind, included in the proscribed and infectious *world*, appeared no less indispensable. Communion with God alone was at once the sole refuge and perfection of the abstracted spirit; prayer the sole unendangered occupation, alternating only with that coarse industry which might give employment to the refractory members, and provide that scanty sustenance required by the inalienable infirmity of corporeal existence. The fears and the hopes were equally wrought upon—the fear of defilement and consequently of eternal perdition; the hope of attaining the serene enjoyment of the divine presence in the life to come. If any thought of love to mankind, as an unquestionable duty entailed by Christian brotherhood, intruded on the isolated being, thus labouring on the single object, his own spiritual perfection, it found a vent in prayer for their happiness, which excused all more active or effective benevolence.

On both principles, of course, marriage was inexorably condemned (2). Some expressions in the writings of St. Paul (3), and emulation of the Gnostic sects, combining with these general sentiments, had very early raised celibacy into the highest of Christian virtues: marriage was a necessary evil, an inevitable infirmity of the weaker brethren. With the more rational and earlier writers, Cyprian, Athanasius, and even in occasional passages in Ambrose or Augustine, it had its own high and peculiar excellence; but even with them, virginity, the absolute estrangement from all sensual indulgence, was the transcendent virtue, the pre-assumption of the angelic state, the approximation to the beatified existence (4).

Celibacy.

(1) It is remarkable how rarely, if ever (I cannot call to mind an instance), in the discussions on the comparative merits of marriage and celibacy, the social advantages appear to have occurred to the mind; the benefit to mankind of raising up a race born from Christian parents and brought up in Christian principles. It is always argued with relation to the interests and the perfection of the individual soul; and even with regard to that, the writers seem almost unconscious of the softening and humanising effect of the natural affections, the beauty of parental tenderness and filial love.

(2) There is a sensible and judicious book, entitled "Die Einführung der Erzwungenen Ehelosigkeit bei dem Christlichen und ihre Folge," von J. A. und Aug. Theiner, Altenburg, 1828, which enters fully into the origin and consequences of celibacy in the whole church.

(3) I agree with Theiner (p. 24.) in considering these precepts local and temporary, relating to the especial circumstances of those whom St. Paul addressed.

(4) The general tone was that of the vehement

Jerome. There must not only be vessels of gold and silver, but of wood and earthenware. This contemptuous admission of the necessity of the married life distinguished the orthodox from the Manichean, the Montanist, and the Encratite. Jerom. adv. Jovin. p. 146.

The sentiments of the Fathers on marriage and virginity may be thus briefly stated. I am not speaking with reference to the marriage of the clergy, which will be considered hereafter.

The earlier writers, when they are contending with the Gnostics, though they elevate virginity above marriage, speak very strongly on the folly, and even the impiety, of prohibiting or disparaging lawful wedlock. They acknowledge and urge the admitted fact that several of the Apostles were married. This is the tone of Ignatius (Cotel. Pat. Apost. ii. 77.), of Tertullian (licebat et Apostolis nubere et uxores circumducere. De Exhort. Castit.), above all, of Clement of Alexandria.

In the time of Cyprian, vows of virginity were not irrevocable. Si autem perseverare nolunt, vel non possunt, melius est ut nubant, quam in

Every thing conspired to promote, nothing remained to counter-act, this powerful impulse. In the East this seclusion from the world was by no means uncommon. Even among the busy and restless Greeks, some of the philosophers had asserted the privilege of wisdom to stand aloof from the rest of mankind; the question of the superior excellence of the active or the contemplative life had been agitated on equal terms. But in some regions of the East, the sultry and oppressive heats, the general relaxation of the physical system, dispose constitutions of a certain temperament to a dreamy inertness. The indolence and prostration of the body produce a kind of activity in the mind, if that may properly be called activity which is merely giving loose to the imagination and the emotions, as they follow out a wild train of incoherent thought, or are agitated by impulses of spontaneous and ungoverned feeling. Ascetic Christianity ministered new aliment to this common propensity; it gave an object both vague and determinate enough to stimulate, yet never to satisfy or exhaust. The regularity of stated hours of prayer, and of a kind of idle industry, weaving mats, or plaiting baskets, alternated with periods of morbid reflection on the moral state of the soul, and of mystic communion with the Deity (1) It cannot, indeed, be wondered that the new revelation, as it were, of the Deity; this profound and rational certainty of his existence; this infelt consciousness of his perpetual presence; these yet unknown impressions of his infinity, his power, and his love, should give a higher character to this eremitical enthusiasm, and attract men of loftier and more vigorous minds within its sphere. It was not merely the pusillanimous dread of encountering the trials of life which urged the humbler spirits to seek the safe retirement, or the natural love of peace, and the weariness and satiety of life, which commended this seclusion to those who were too gentle to mingle in, or who were exhausted with, the unprofitable turmoil of the world. Nor was it always the anxiety to mortify the rebellious and

ignem delictis suis cadant. Epist. 62. And his general language, more particularly his tract de Habitu Virginum, implies that strong discipline was necessary to restrain the dedicated virgins from the vanities of the world.

But in the fourth century the eloquent Fathers vie with each other in exalting the transcendent, holy, angelic virtue of virginity. Every one of the more distinguished writers,—Basil, the two Gregories, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, has a treatise or treatises upon virginity, on which he expands with all the glowing language which he can command. It became a common doctrine that sexual intercourse was the sign and the consequence of the Fall; they forgot that the command to “increase and multiply” is placed in the Book of Genesis (i. 28.) before the Fall.

We have before (p. 198.) quoted passages from Greg. of Nazianzum. Gregory of Nyssa says,—*ὁδὸν δὲ ἀπάτης ἐγγισσόμενην τῆς*

*ἐκπτώσεως ἤρξατο—ἐν ἀνομίαις ἐστὶν ἡ σύλληψις, ἐν ἀμαρτίαις ἡ κύνησις.* Greg. Nyss. de Virgin. c. 12 c. 13. But Jerome is the most vehement of all:—*Nuptiæ terram replent, virginitas Paradisum. The unclean beasts went by pairs into the ark, the clean by seven. Though there is another mystery in the pairs, even the unclean beasts were not to be allowed a second marriage:—Ne in bestiis quidem et immundis avibus digama comprobata sit.* Adv. Jovin. vol. iv. p. 160. *Laudo nuptias, laudo conjugium, sed quia mihi virgines generat.* Ad Eustoch. p. 36.

(1) Nam pariter exercentes corporis animæque virtutes, exterioris hominis stipendia cum emolumentis interioris exæquant, lubricis motibus cordis, et fluctuationi cogitationum instabili, operum pondera, velut quandam tenacem atque immobilem anchoram præfigentes, cui volubilitas ac pervagatio cordis innexa intra cella claustra, velut in portu fidissimo valeat contineri. Cassian. Instit. ii. 13.



refractory body with more advantage; the one absorbing idea of the majesty of the Godhead almost seemed to swallow up all other considerations; the transcendent nature of the Triune Deity, the relation of the different persons in the Godhead to each other, seemed the only worthy objects of man's contemplative faculties. If the soul never aspired to that Pantheistic union with the spiritual essence of being which is the supreme ambition of the higher Indian mysticism, their theory seemed to promise a sublime estrangement from all sublunary things, an occupation for the spirit, already, as it were, disembodied and immaterialised by its complete concentration on the Deity.

In Syria and in Egypt, as well as in the remoter East, the example had already been set both of solitary retirement and of religious communities. The Jews had both their hermitages and their cœnobitic institutions. Anchorites swarmed in the deserts near the Dead Sea (1); and the Essenes, in the same district, and the Egyptian Therapeutæ, were strictly analogous to the Christian monastic establishments. In the neighbourhood of many of the Eastern cities were dreary and dismal wastes, incapable of, or unimproved by, cultivation, which seemed to allure the enthusiast to abandon the haunts of men and the vices of society. Egypt especially, where every thing excessive and extravagant found its birth or ripened with unexampled vigour, seemed formed for the encouragement of the wildest anchoritism. It is a long narrow valley, closed in on each side by craggy or by sandy deserts. The rocks were pierced either with natural caverns, or hollowed out by the hand of man into long subterranean cells and galleries for various uses, either of life, or of superstition, or of sepulture. The Christian, sometimes driven out by persecution (for persecution no doubt greatly contributed to people these solitudes) (2), or prompted by religious feelings, to fly from the face of man, found himself, with no violent effort, in a dead and voiceless wilderness, under a climate which required no other shelter than the ceiling of the rock-hewn cave, and where actual sustenance might be obtained, with little difficulty.

St. Antony is sometimes described as the founder of the monastic life; it is clear, however, that he only imitated and excelled the example of less famous anchorites. But he may fairly be considered as its representative.

Antony (3) was born of Christian parents, bred up in the faith, and before he was twenty years old, found himself master of considerable wealth, and charged with the care of a younger sister. He was a youth of ardent imagination, vehement impulses, and so im-

(1) Josephi Vita.

(2) Paul, the first Christian hermit, fled from persecution. Hieronym. Vit. Paul. p. 69.

(3) The fact that the great Athanasius paused

in his polemic warfare to write the life of Antony, may show the general admiration towards the monastic life.

perfectly educated as to be acquainted with no language but his native Egyptian (1). A constant attendant on Christian worship, he had long looked back with admiration on those primitive times when the Christians laid all their worldly goods at the feet of the Apostles. One day he heard the sentence, "Go, sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, \* \* and come, and follow me." It seemed personally addressed to himself by the voice of God. He returned home, distributed his lands among his neighbours, sold his furniture and other effects, except a small sum reserved for his sister, whom he placed under the care of some pious Christian virgins. Another text, "Take no thought for the morrow," transpierced his heart, and sent him forth for ever from the society of men. He found an aged solitary, who dwelt without the city. He was seized with pious emulation, and from that time devoted himself to the severest asceticism. There was still, however, something gentle and humane about the ascetism of Antony. His retreat (if we may trust the romantic life of St. Hilarion, in the works of St. Jerome), was by no means of the horrid and savage character affected by some other recluses: it was at the foot of a high and rocky mountain, from which welled forth a stream of limpid water, bordered by palms, which afforded an agreeable shade. Antony had planted this pleasant spot with vines and shrubs; there was an enclosure for fruit trees and vegetables, and a tank from which the labour of Antony irrigated his garden. His conduct and character seemed to partake of this less stern and gloomy tendency (2). He visited the most distinguished anchorites, but only to observe, that he might imitate the peculiar virtue of each; the gentle disposition of one; the constancy of prayer in another; the kindness, the patience, the industry, the vigils, the macerations, the love of study, the passionate contemplation of the Deity, the charity towards mankind. It was his devout ambition to equal or transcend each in his particular austerity, or distinctive excellence.

Dæmonology.

But man does not violate nature with impunity; the solitary state had its passions, its infirmities, its perils. The hermit could fly from his fellow men, but not from himself. The vehement and fervid temperament which drove him into the desert was not subdued; it found new ways of giving loose to its suppressed impulses. The self-centred imagination began to people the desert with worse enemies than mankind. Dæmonology, in all its multiplied forms, was now an established part of the Christian creed, and embraced with the greatest ardour by men in such a state of religious excitement, as to turn hermits. The trials, the temptations, the agonies, were felt and described as personal conflicts with hosts of impure,

(1) Jerome claims the honour of being the first hermit for Paul, in the time of Decius or Valerian, (Vit. Paul. p. 68.); but the whole life of Paul, and the visit of Antony to him, read like

religious romance, and, from the preface of Jerome to the Life of Hilarion, did not find implicit credit in his own day.

(2) Vita St. Hilarion. p. 85.

malignant, furious, fiends. In the desert, these beings took visible form and substance; in the day-dreams of profound religious meditation, in the visions of the agitated and exhausted spirit, they were undiscernible from reality (1). It is impossible, in the wild legends which became an essential part of Christian literature, to decide how much is the disordered imagination of the saint, the self-deception of the credulous, or the fiction of the zealous writer. The very effort to suppress certain feelings has a natural tendency to awaken and strengthen them. The horror of carnal indulgence would not permit the sensual desires to die away into apathy. Men are apt to find what they seek in their own hearts, and by anxiously searching for the guilt of lurking lust, or desire of worldly wealth or enjoyment, the conscience, as it were, struck forcibly upon the chord which it wished to deaden, and made it vibrate with a kind of morbid, but more than ordinary, energy. Nothing was so licentious or so terrible as not to find its way to the cell of the recluse. Beautiful women danced around him; wild beasts of every shape, and monsters with no shape at all, howled and yelled and shrieked about him, while he knelt in prayer, or snatched his broken slumbers. "Oh how often in the desert," says Jerome, "in that vast solitude, which, parched by the sultry sun, affords a dwelling to the monks, did I fancy myself in the midst of the luxuries of Rome. I sate alone, for I was full of bitterness. My misshapen limbs were rough with sackcloth; and my skin was so squalid that I might have been taken for a negro. Tears and groans were my occupation every day, and all day: if sleep surprised me unawares, my naked bones, which scarcely held together, clashed on the earth. I will say nothing of my food or beverage: even the rich have nothing but cold water; any warm drink is a luxury. Yet even I, who for the fear of hell had condemned myself to this dungeon, the companion only of scorpions and wild beasts, was in the midst of girls dancing. My face was pale with fasting, but the mind in my cold body burned with desires; the fires of lust boiled up in the body, which was already dead. Destitute of all succour, I cast myself at the feet of Jesus, washed them with my tears, dried them with my hair, and subdued the rebellious flesh by a whole week's fasting." After describing the wild scenes into which he fled, the deep glens and shaggy precipices,—“The Lord is my witness,” he concludes; “sometimes I appeared to be present among the angelic hosts, and sang, ‘We will haste after thee for the sweet savour of thy ointments (2).’” For at times, on the other hand, gentle and more than human voices were heard consoling the constant and devout recluse; and sometimes the baffled dæmon would humbly acknowledge himself to be rebuked before him. But

(1) Compare Jerome's *Life of St. Hilarion*. p. 76.

(2) Song of Solomon. Hieronym. *Epist.* xxii.



Self-  
torture.

this was in general after a fearful struggle. Desperate diseases require desperate remedies. The severest pain could alone subdue or distract the refractory desires, or the preoccupied mind. Human invention was exhausted in self-inflicted torments. The Indian fakir was rivalled in the variety of distorted postures and of agonising exercises. Some lived in clefts and caves; some in huts, into which the light of day could not penetrate; some hung huge weights to their arms, necks, or loins; some confined themselves in cages; some on the tops of mountains, exposed to the sun and weather. The most celebrated hermit at length for life condemned himself to stand in a fiery climate, on the narrow top of a pillar (1). Nor were these always rude or uneducated fanatics. St. Arsenius had filled, and with universal respect, the dignified post of tutor to the Emperor Arcadius. But Arsenius became an hermit; and, among other things, it is related of him, that, employing himself in the common occupation of the Egyptian monks, weaving baskets of palm leaves, he changed only once a year the water in which the leaves were moistened. The smell of the fetid water was a just penalty for the perfumes which he had inhaled during his worldly life. Even sleep was a sin; an hour's unbroken slumber was sufficient for a monk. On Saturday evening, Arsenius laid down with his back to the setting sun, and continued awake, in fervent prayer, till the rising sun shone on his eyes (2); so far had Christianity departed from its humane and benevolent and social simplicity.

It may be a curious question how far enthusiasm repays its votaries as far as the individual is concerned; in what degree these self-inflicted tortures added to or diminished the real happiness of man; how far these privations and bodily sufferings, which to the cool and unexcited reason appear intolerable, either themselves produced a callous insensibility, or were met by apathy arising out of the strong counter-excitement of the mind; to what extent, if still felt in unmitigated anguish, they were compensated by inward complacency from the conscious fulfilment of religious duty; the stern satisfaction of the will at its triumph over nature; the elevation of mind from the consciousness of the great object in view, or the ecstatic pre-enjoyment of certain reward. In some instances, they might derive some recompense from the respect, veneration, almost adoration, of men. Emperors visited the cells of these ignorant, perhaps superstitious, fanatics, revered them as oracles, and con-

(1) The language of Evagrius (H. E. i. 13.) about Simeon vividly expresses the effect which he made on his own age. "Rivalling while yet in the flesh, the conversation of angels, he withdrew himself from all earthly things, and doing violence to nature, which always has a downward tendency, he aspired after that which is on high; and standing midway between earth and heaven, he had communion with God, and glori-

fied God with the angels; from the earth offering supplications (*προσεύχας προάγων*) as an ambassador to God; bringing down from heaven to men the divine blessing." The influence of the most holy martyr in the air (*παραγίου και ασπίου μάρτυρος*) on political affairs, lies beyond the range of the present history.

(2) Compare Fleury, xx. l. 2.

ducted the affairs of empire by their advice. The great Theodosius is said to have consulted John the Solitary on the issue of the war with Eugenius (1). His feeble successors followed faithfully the example of his superstition.

Antony appeared at the juncture most favourable for the acceptance of his monastic tenets (2). His fame and his example tended still further to disseminate the spreading contagion. In every part the desert began to swarm with anchorities, who found it difficult to remain alone. Some sought out the most retired chambers of the ancient cemeteries; some those narrow spots which remained above water during the inundations, and saw with pleasure the tide arise which was to render them unapproachable to their fellow-creatures. But in all parts the determined solitary found himself constantly obliged to recede farther and farther; he could scarcely find a retreat so dismal, a cavern so profound, a rock so inaccessible, but that he would be pressed upon by some zealous competitor, or invaded by the humble veneration of some disciple.

Influence  
of Antony.

It is extraordinary to observe this infringement on the social system of Christianity, this disconnecting principle, which, pushed to excess, might appear fatal to that organisation in which so much of the strength of Christianity consisted, gradually self-expanding into a new source of power and energy, so wonderfully adapted to the age. The desire of the anchorite to isolate himself in unendangered seclusion was constantly balanced and corrected by the holy zeal or involuntary tendency to proselytism. The farther the saint retired from the habitations of men, the brighter and more attractive became the light of his sanctity; the more he concealed himself, the more was he sought out by a multitude of admiring and emulous followers. Each built or occupied his cell in the hallowed neighbourhood. A monastery was thus imperceptibly formed around the hermitage; and nothing was requisite to the incorporation of a regular community, but the formation of rules for common intercourse, stated meetings for worship, and something of uniformity in dress, food, and daily occupations. Some monastic establishments were no doubt formed at once, in imitation of the Jewish Therapeutæ; but many of the more celebrated Egyptian establishments gathered, as it were, around the central cell of an Antony or Pachomius (3).

Something like an uniformity of usage appears to have prevailed in the Egyptian monasteries. The brothers were dressed, after the fashion of the country, in long linen tunics, with a woollen girdle, a cloak, and over it a sheep-kin. They usually went barefooted, but

Cœnobitic  
establish-  
ments.

(1) Evagr. Vit. St. Paul. c. 1. Theodoret, v. 24. See Flechier, Vie de Theodose, iv. 43

(2) Hujus vitæ auctor Paulus illustrator Antonius. Jerom. p. 46.

(3) Pachomius was, strictly speaking the

founder of the cœnobitic establishments in Egypt; Eustathius in Armenia; Basil in Asia. Pachomius had 1400 monks in his establishment; 7000 acknowledged his jurisdiction.

at certain very cold or very parching seasons, they wore a kind of sandal. They did not wear the hair-cloth (1). Their food was bread and water; their luxuries, occasionally a little oil or salt, a few olives, peas, or a single fig: they ate in perfect silence, each decury by itself. They were bound to strict obedience to their superiors; they were divided into decuries and centenaries, over whom the decurions and centurions presided: each had his separate cell (2). The furniture of their cells was a mat of palm leaves and a bundle of the papyrus, which served for a pillow by night and a seat by day. Every evening and every night they were summoned to prayer by the sound of a horn. At each meeting were sung twelve psalms, pointed out, it was believed, by an angel. On certain occasions, lessons were read from the Old or New Testament. The assembly preserved total silence; nothing was heard but the voice of the chanter or reader. No one dared even to look at another. The tears of the audience alone, or if he spoke of the joys of eternal beatitude, a gentle murmur of hope, was the only sound which broke the stillness of the auditory. At the close of each psalm, the whole assembly prostrated itself in mute adoration (3). In every part of Egypt, from the Cataracts to the Delta, the whole land was bordered by these communities; there were 5000 cœnobites in the desert of Nitria alone (4); the total number of male anchorites and monks was estimated at 76,000; the females at 27,700. Parts of Syria were, perhaps, scarcely less densely peopled with ascetics. Cappadocia and the provinces bordering on Persia boasted of numerous communities, as well as Asia Minor and the eastern parts of Europe. Though the monastic spirit was in its full power, the establishment of regular communities in Italy must be reserved for Benedict of Nursia, and lies beyond the bounds of our present history. The enthusiasm pervaded all orders. Men of rank, of family, of wealth, of education, suddenly changed the luxurious palace for the howling wilderness, the flatteries of men for the total silence of the desert. They voluntarily abandoned their estates, their connections, their worldly prospects. The desire of fame, of power, of influence, which might now swell the ranks of the ecclesiastics, had no concern in their sacrifice. Multitudes must have perished without the least knowledge of their virtues or their fate transpir-

(1) Jerome speaks of the cilicium as common among the Syrian monks, with whom he lived. *Epist. i.* Horrent sacco membra deformi. Even women assumed it. *Epitaph. Paulæ, p. 678.* Cassian is inclined to think it often a sign of pride. *Instit. i, 3.*

(2) The accounts of Jerome (in *Eustochium, p. 45.*) and of Cassian are blended. There is some difference as to the hours of meeting for prayers, but probably the cœnobitic institutes differed as to that and on some points of diet.

(3) *Tantum a cunctis præbetur silentium, ut cum in unum tam numerosa fratrum multitudo*

*conveniat, præter illum, qui consurgens psalmum decantat in medio, nullus hominum penitus adesse credatur.* No one was heard to spit, to sneeze, to cough, or to yawn—there was not even a sigh or a groan—*nisi fortè hæc quæ per excessum mentis claustra oris effugerit, quæque insensibiliter cordi obreperit, immoderato siliçet atque intolerabili spiritus fervore succenso, dum ea quæ ingnita mens in semetipsâ non prævalet continere, per ineffabilem quandam gemitum pectoris sui conclavibus evaporare conatur.* *Cassian. Instit. ii. 10.*

(4) *Jerom. ad Eustoch. p. 44.*



ing in the world. Few could obtain or hope to obtain the honour of canonisation, or that celebrity which Jerome promises to his friend Blesilla, to live not merely in heaven, but in the memory of man; to be consecrated to immortality by his writings (1).

But the cœnobitic establishments had their dangers no less than the cell of the solitary hermit. Besides those consequences of seclusion from the world, the natural results of confinement in this close separation from mankind and this austere discharge of stated duties, were too often found to be the proscription of human knowledge and the extinction of human sympathies. Christian wisdom and Christian humanity could find no place in their unsocial system. A morose, and sullen, and contemptuous ignorance could not but grow up where there was no communication with the rest of mankind, and the human understanding was rigidly confined to certain topics. The want of objects of natural affection could not but harden the heart; and those who, in their stern religious austerity are merciless to themselves, are apt to be merciless to others (2): their callous and insensible hearts have no sense of the exquisitely delicate and poignant feelings which arise out of the domestic affections. Bigotry had always found its readiest and sternest executioners among those who have never known the charities of life.

Dangers of  
cœnobi-  
tism.

Bigotry.

These fatal effects seem inherent consequences of Monasticism; its votaries could not but degenerate from their lofty and sanctifying purposes. That which in one generation was sublime enthusiasm, in the next became sullen bigotry, or sometimes wrought the same individual into a stern forgetfulness, not only of the vices and follies, but of all the more generous and sacred feelings of humanity. In the cœnobitic institutes was added a strong corporate spirit, and a blind attachment to their own opinions, which were identified with religion and the glory of God. The monks of Nitria, from simple and harmless enthusiasts, became ferocious bands of partisans; instead of remaining aloof in jealous seclusion from the factions of the rest of the world, they rushed down armed into Alexandria: what they considered a sacred cause inflamed and warranted a ferocity not surpassed by the turbulent and blood-thirsty rabble of that city. In support of a favourite doctrine, or in defence

Fanati-  
cism.

(1) *Quæ cum Christo vivit in cœlis, in hominum quoque ore victura est.* \* \* *Nunquam in meis moritura est libris.* Epist. xxiii. p. 60.

(2) There is a cruel history of an abbot, Mucius, in Cassian. Mucius entreated admission into a monastery. He had one little boy with him of eight years old. They were placed in separate cells, lest the father's heart should be softened and indisposed to total renunciation of all earthly joys, by the sight of his child. That he might still farther prove his Christian obedience!! and self-denial, the child was systematically neglected, dressed in rags, and so dirty, as to be disgusting to the father; he was frequently beaten, to try whether it would force

tears down the parent's squalid cheeks. "*Nevertheless, for the love of Christ!!!* and from the virtue of obedience, the heart of the father remained hard and unmoved," thinking little of his child's tears, only of his own humility and perfection. He at length was urged to show the last mark of his submission by throwing the child into the river. As if this was a *commandment of God*, he seized the child, and "the work of faith and obedience" would have been accomplished, if the brethren had not interposed, "and, as it were, rescued the child from the waters." And Cassian relates this as an act of the highest religious heroism! Lib. iv. 27.

of a popular prelate, they did not consider that they were violating their own first principles, in yielding to all the savage passions, and mingling in the bloody strife of that world which they had abandoned.

Ignorance. Total seclusion from mankind is as dangerous to enlightened religion as to Christian charity. We might have expected to find among those who separated themselves from the world, to contemplate, undisturbed, the nature and perfections of the Deity, in general, the purest and most spiritual notions of the Godhead. Those whose primary principle was dread of a corruption of matter would be the last coarsely to materialise their divinity. But those who could elevate their thoughts, or could maintain them at this height, were but a small part of the vast numbers, whom the many mingled motives of zeal, superstition, piety, pride, emulation, or distaste for the world, led into the desert; they required something more gross and palpable than the fine and subtle conception of a spiritual being. Superstition, not content with crowding the brain with imaginary figments, spread its darkening mists over the Deity himself.

It was among the monks of Egypt that anthropomorphism assumed its most vulgar and obstinate form. They would not be persuaded that the expressions in the sacred writings which ascribe human acts, and faculties, and passions to the Deity were to be understood as a condescension to the weakness of our nature; they seemed disposed to compensate to themselves for the loss of human society by degrading the Deity, whom they professed to be their sole companion, to the likeness of man. Imagination could not maintain its flight, and they could not summon reason, which they surrendered with the rest of their dangerous freedom, to supply its place; and generally superstition demanded and received the same implicit and resolute obedience as religion itself. Once having humanised the Deity, they could not be weaned from the object of their worship. The great cause of quarrel between Theophilus, the Archbishop of Alexandria, and the monks of the adjacent establishments, was his vain attempt to enlighten them on those points to which they obstinately adhered, as the vital and essential part of their faith.

Pride, moreover, is almost the necessary result of such distinctions as the monks drew between themselves and the rest of mankind; and prejudice and obstinacy are the natural fruits of pride. Once having embraced opinions, however, as in this instance, contrary to their primary principles, small communities are with the utmost difficulty induced to surrender those tenets in which they support and strengthen each other by the general concurrence. The anthropomorphism of the Egyptian monks resisted alike argument and authority. The bitter and desperate remonstrance of the

aged Serapion, when he was forced to surrender his anthropomorphic notions of the Deity,—“ You have deprived me of my God (1).” shows not merely the degraded intellectual state of the monks of Egypt, but the incapacity of the mass of mankind to keep up such high-wrought and imaginative conceptions. Enthusiasm of any particular kind wastes itself as soon as its votaries become numerous; it may hand down its lamp from individual to individual for many generations; but when it would include a whole section of society, it substitutes some new incentive, strong party or corporate feeling, habit, advantage, or the pride of exclusiveness, for its original disinterested zeal; and can never for a long period adhere to its original principles.

The effect of Monachism on Christianity, and on society at large, was of very mingled character. Its actual influence on the population of the empire was probably not considerable, and would scarcely counterbalance the increase arising out of the superior morality, as regards sexual intercourse, introduced by the Christian religion (2). Some apprehensions, indeed, were betrayed on this point, and when the opponents of Monachism urged, that if such principles were universally admitted, the human race would come to an end, its resolute advocates replied, that the Almighty, if necessary, would appoint new means for the propagation of mankind.

General effects of Monachism on Christianity.

The withdrawal of so much ardour, talent, and virtue into seclusion, which, however elevating to the individual, became altogether unprofitable to society, might be considered a more serious objection. The barren world could ill spare any active or inventive mind. Public affairs, at this disastrous period, demanded the best energies which could be combined from the whole Roman world for their administration. This dereliction of their social duties by so many, could not but leave the competition more open to the base and unworthy, particularly as the actual abandonment of the world, and the capability of ardent enthusiasm, in men of high station, or of commanding intellect, displayed a force and independence of character which might, it should seem, have rendered important active service to mankind. If barbarians were admitted by a perilous, yet inevitable policy, into the chief military commands, was not this measure at least hastened, not merely by the general influence of Christianity, which reluctantly permitted its

On political affairs.

(1) Cassian Collat. x. 1.

(2) There is a curious passage of St. Ambrose on this point. “ Si quis igitur putat, conservatione virginum minui genus humanum, consideret, quia, ubi paucæ virgines, ibi etiam pauciores homines: ubi virginitatis studia crebriora, ibi numerum quoque hominum esse majorem. Dicite, quantas Alexandrina, totiusque Orientis, et Africana ecclesia, quotannis sacrare consueverint. Pauciores hic homines prodeant, quam illic

virgines consecrantur.” We should wish to know whether there was any statistical ground for this singular assertion, that, in those regions in which celibacy was most practised, the population increased—or whether Egypt, the East, and Africa, were generally more prolific than Italy. The assertion that the vows of virginity in those countries exceeded the births in the latter is, most probably, to be set down to antithesis.



volaries to enter into the army, but still more by Monachism, which withdrew them altogether into religious inactivity? The civil and fiscal departments, and especially that of public education conducted by salaried professors, might also be deprived of some of the most eligible and useful candidates for employment. At a time of such acknowledged deficiency, it may have appeared little less than a treasonable indifference to the public welfare, to break all connection with mankind, and to dwell in unsocial seclusion entirely on individual interests. Such might have been the remonstrance of a sober and dispassionate Pagan (1), and in part of those few more rational Christians, who could not consider the rigid monastic Christianity as the original religion of its divine founder.

If, indeed, this peaceful enthusiasm had counteracted any general outburst of patriotism, or left vacant or abandoned to worthless candidates posts in the public service which could be commanded by great talents and honourable integrity, Monachism might fairly be charged with weakening the energies and deadening the resistance of the Roman empire to its gathering and multiplying adversaries. But the state of public affairs probably tended more to the growth of Monachism than Monachism to the disorder and disorganisation of public affairs. The partial and unjust distribution of the rewards of public service; the uncertainty of distinction in any career, which entirely depended on the favouritism and intrigue within the narrow circle of the court; the difficulty of emerging to eminence under a despotism by fair and honourable means; disgust and disappointment at slighted pretensions and baffled hopes; the general and apparently hopeless oppression which weighed down all mankind; the total extinction of the generous feelings of freedom; the conscious decrepitude of the human mind; the inevitable conviction that its productive energies in knowledge, literature, and arts, were extinct and effete, and that every path was preoccupied,—all these concurrent motives might naturally, in a large proportion of the most vigorous and useful minds, generate a distaste and weariness of the world. Religion, then almost universally dominant, would seize on this feeling, and enlist it in her service: it would avail itself of, not produce, the despondent determination to abandon an ungrateful world; it would ennoble and exalt the preconceived motives for seclusion; give a kind of conscious grandeur to inactivity, and substitute a dreamy but elevating love for the Deity for contemptuous misanthropy, as the justification for the total desertion of social duty. Monachism, in short, instead of precipitating the fall of the Roman empire, by enfeebling in any great degree its powers of resistance, enabled some portion of mankind to escape from the feeling of shame and

Some of  
its advan-  
tages.

(1) Compare the law of Valens, de Monachis, quoted above.

misery. Amid the irremediable evils and the wretchedness that could not be averted, it was almost a social benefit to raise some part of mankind to a state of serene indifference, to render some at least superior to the general calamities. Monachism, indeed, directly secured many in their isolation from all domestic ties, from that worst suffering inflicted by barbarous warfare, the sight of beloved females outraged, and innocent children butchered. In those times, the man was happiest who had least to lose, and who exposed the fewest vulnerable points of feeling or sympathy : the natural affections, in which, in ordinary times, consists the best happiness of man, were in those days such perilous indulgences, that he who was entirely detached from them embraced, perhaps considering temporal views alone, the most prudent course. The solitary could but suffer in his own person ; and though by no means secure in his sanctity from insult, or even death, his self-inflicted privations hardened him against the former, his high-wrought enthusiasm enabled him to meet the latter with calm resignation : he had none to leave whom he had to lament, none to lament him after his departure. The spoiler who found his way to his secret cell was baffled by his poverty ; and the sword which cut short his days but shortened his painful pilgrimage on earth, and removed him at once to an anticipated heaven. With what different feelings would he behold, in his poor, and naked, and solitary cell, the approach of the blood-thirsty barbarians, from the father of a family, in his splendid palace, or his more modest and comfortable private dwelling, with a wife in his arms, whose death he would desire to see rather than that worse than death to which she might first be doomed in his presence ; with helpless children clinging around his knees : the blessings which he had enjoyed, the wealth or comfort of his house, the beauty of his wife, of his daughters, or even of his sons, being the strongest attraction to the spoiler, and irritating more violently his merciless and unsparing passions. If to some the monastic state offered a refuge for the sad remainder of their bereaved life, others may have taken warning in time, and with deliberate forethought refused to implicate themselves in tender connections, which were threatened with such deplorable end. Those, who secluded themselves from domestic relations, from other motives, at all events were secured from such miseries, and might be envied by those who had played the game of life with a higher stake, and ventured on its purest pleasures, with the danger of incurring all its bitterest reverses.

Monachism tended powerfully to keep up the vital enthusiasm of Christianity. Allusion has been made to its close connection with the conversion both of the Roman and the Barbarian ; and to the manner in which, from its settlement in some retired Pagan district, it gradually disseminated the faith, and sometimes the industrious,

Effect on  
the main-  
tenance of  
Christian-  
ity.

always the moral, influence of Christianity through the neighbourhood in a gradually expanding circle. Its peaceful colonies, within the frontier of Barbarism, slowly but uninterruptedly subdued the fierce or indolent savages to the religion of Christ and the manners and habits of civilisation. But its internal influence was not less visible, immediate, and inexhaustible. The more extensive dissemination of Christianity naturally weakened its authority. When the small primitive assembly of the Christians grew into an universal church; when the village, the town, the city, the province, the empire, became in outward form and profession Christian, the practical Heathenism only retired to work more silently and imperceptibly into the Christian system. The wider the circle, the fainter the line of distinction from the surrounding waters. Small societies have a kind of self-acting principle of conservation within. Mutual inspection generates mutual awe; the generous rivalry in religious attainment keeps up regularity in attendance on the sacred institutions, and at least propriety of demeanour. Such small communities may be disturbed by religious faction, but are long before they degenerate into unchristian licentiousness, or languish into religious apathy. But when a large proportion of Christians received the faith as an inheritance from their fathers rather than from personal conviction; when hosts of deserters from Paganism passed over into the opposite camp, not because it was the best, but because it was the most flourishing cause; it became inexpedient, as well as impossible, to maintain the severer discipline of former times. But Monachism was constantly reorganising small societies, in which the bond of aggregation was the common religious fervour, in which emulation continually kept up the excitement, and mutual vigilance exercised unresisted authority. The exaggeration of their religious sentiments was at once the tenure of their existence, and the guarantee for their perpetuity. Men would never be wanting to enrol themselves in their ranks, and their constitution prevented them from growing to an unmanageable size; when one establishment or institution wore out, another was sure to spring up. The republics of Monachism were constantly reverting to their first principles, and undergoing a vigorous and thorough reformation. Thus, throughout the whole of Christian history, until, or even after, the Reformation, within the church of Rome, we find either new monastic orders rising, or the old remodelled and regulated by the zeal of some ardent enthusiast; the associatory principle, that great political and religious engine which is either the conservative or the destructive power in every period of society, was constantly embracing a certain number of persons devoted to a common end; and the new sect, distinguished by some peculiar badge of dress, of habit, or of monastic rule, re-embodied some of the fervour of primitive Christianity, and awakened the growing lethargy, by the example of



unusual austerities, or rare and exemplary activity in the dissemination of the faith.

The beneficial tendency of this constant formation of young and vigorous societies in the bosom of Christianity was of more importance in the times of desolation and confusion which impended over the Roman empire. In this respect, likewise, their lofty pretensions insured their utility. Where reason itself was about to be in abeyance, rational religion would have had but little chance : it would have commanded no respect. Christianity, in its primitive simple and unassuming form, might have imparted its holiness, and peace, and happiness, to retired families, whether in the city or the province, but its modest and retiring dignity would have made no impression on the general tone and character of society. There was something in the seclusion of religious men from mankind, in their standing aloof from the rest of the world, calculated to impress barbarous minds with a feeling of their peculiar sanctity. The less they were like to ordinary men, the more, in the ordinary estimation, they were approximated to the divinity. At all events this apparently broad and manifest evidence of their religious sincerity would be more impressive to unreasoning minds than the habits of the clergy, which approached more nearly to those of the common laity (1).

The influence of this continual rivalry of another sacred, though not decidedly sacerdotal class, upon the secular clergy, led to important results. We may perhaps ascribe to the constant presence of Monachism the continuance and the final recognition of the celibacy of the clergy, the vital principle of the ecclesiastical power in the middle ages. Without the powerful direct support which they received from the monastic orders; without the indirect authority over the minds of men which flowed from their example, and inseparably connected, in the popular mind, superior sanctity with the renunciation of marriage, the ambitious popes would never have been able, particularly in the north, to part the clergy by this strong line of demarcation from the profane laity. As it was, it required the most vigorous and continued effort to establish, by ecclesiastical regulation and papal power, that which was no longer in accordance with the religious sentiments of the clergy themselves. The general practice of marriage, or of a kind of legalised concubinage, among the northern clergy, showed the tendency, if it had not been thus counteracted by the rival order, and by the dominant *ecclesiastical* policy of the Church (2). But it is impossible to calculate

Influence  
on the  
clergy.

In promot-  
ing celi-  
bacy.

(1) The monks were originally laymen (Cassian, v. 26); gradually churches were attached to the monasteries, but these were served by regularly ordained clergy.—(Pallad. Hist. Lausiaca.); but their reputation for sanctity constantly exposed them to be seized and consecrated by the ardent admiration of their followers.

Theiner has collected with considerable labour a long list of the more celebrated prelates of the church who had been monks. p. 106. Ita ergo age et vive in monasterio, ut clericus esse merearis. Hieron. Epist. ad Rustic. 95.

(2) The general question of the celibacy of the clergy will be subsequently examined.

the effect of that complete blending up of the clergy with the rest of the community which would probably have ensued from the gradual abrogation of this single distinction at this juncture. The interests of their order, in men connected with the community by the ordinary social ties, would have been secondary to their own personal advancement, or that of their families. They would have ceased to be a peculiar and separate caste, and sunk down into the common penury, rudeness, and ignorance. Their influence would be closely connected with their wealth and dignity, which, of course, on the other hand, would tend to augment their influence; but that corporate ambition which induced them to consider the cause of their order as their own; that desire of riches, which wore the honourable appearance of personal desinterestedness, and zeal for the splendour of religion, could not have existed but in a class completely insulated from the common feelings and interests of the community. Individual members of the clergy might have become wealthy, and obtained authority over the ignorant herd, but there would have been no opulent and powerful Church, acting with vigorous unity, and arranged in simultaneous hostility against Barbarism and Paganism.

Our history must hereafter trace the connection of the independence and separate existence of the clergy with the maintenance and the authority of Christianity. But even as conservators of the lingering remains of science, arts, and letters, as the sole order to which some kind of intellectual education was necessary, when knowledge was a distinction which alone commanded respect, the clergy were, not without advantage, secured by their celibacy from the cares and toils of social life. In this respect, Monachism acted in two ways; as itself the most efficient guardian of what was most worth preserving in the older civilisation, and as preventing, partly by emulation, partly by this enforcement of celibacy, the secular clergy from degenerating universally into that state of total ignorance which prevailed among them in some quarters.

It is impossible to survey Monachism in its general influence, from the earliest period of its interworking into Christianity, without being astonished and perplexed with its diametrically opposite effects. Here, it is the undoubted parent of the blindest ignorance and the most ferocious bigotry, sometimes of the most debasing licentiousness; there, the guardian of learning, the author of civilisation, the propagator of humble and peaceful religion. To the dominant spirit of Monachism may be ascribed some part at least of the gross superstition and moral inefficiency of the church in the Byzantine empire; to the same spirit much of the salutary authority of Western Christianity, its constant aggressions on barbarism, and its connection with the Latin literature. Yet neither will the different genius of the East and West account for this contradictory

operation of the monastic spirit in the two divisions of the Roman empire. If human nature was degraded by the filth and fanatic self-torture, the callous apathy, and the occasional sanguinary violence, of the Egyptian or Syrian monk, yet the monastic retreat sent forth its Basils and Chrysostoms, who seemed to have braced their strong intellects by the air of the desert. Their intrepid and disinterested devotion to their great cause, the complete concentration of their whole faculties on the advancement of Christianity, seemed strengthened by this entire detachment from mankind.

Nothing can be conceived more apparently opposed to the designs of the God of nature, and to the mild and beneficent spirit of Christianity; nothing more hostile to the dignity, the interests, the happiness, and the intellectual and moral perfection of man, than the monk afflicting himself with unnecessary pain, and thrilling his soul with causeless fears; confined to a dull routine of religious duties, jealously watching, and proscribing every emotion of pleasure as a sin against the benevolent Deity; dreading knowledge as an impious departure from the becoming humility of man.

On the other hand, what generous or lofty mind can refuse to acknowledge the grandeur of that superiority to all the cares and passions of mortality; the felicity of that state which is removed far above the fears or the necessities of life; that sole passion of admiration and love of the Deity, which no doubt was attained by some of the purer and more imaginative enthusiasts of the cell or the cloister. Who still more will dare to depreciate that heroism of Christian benevolence, which underwent this self-denial of the lawful enjoyments and domestic charities of which it had neither extinguished the desire, nor subdued the regret, not from the slavish fear of displeasing the Deity, or the selfish ambition of personal perfection; but from the genuine desire of advancing the temporal and eternal improvement of mankind; of imparting the moral amelioration and spiritual hopes of Christianity to the wretched and the barbarous; of being the messengers of Christian faith, and the ministers of Christian charity, to the Heathen, whether in creed or in character.

We return from this long, but not unnecessary digression, to the life of Jerome, the great advocate of Monachism in the West. Jerome began and closed his career as a monk of Palestine: he attained, he aspired to, no dignity in the church. Though ordained a presbyter against his will, he escaped the episcopal dignity which was forced upon his distinguished contemporaries. He left to Ambrose, to Chrysostom, and to Augustine, the authority of office, and was content with the lower, but not less extensive, influence of personal communication, or the effect of his writings. After having passed his youth in literary studies in Rome, and travelling throughout the West, he visited Palestine. During his voyage to the East,



he surveyed some great cities, and consulted their libraries; he was received in Cyprus by the Bishop Epiphanius. In Syria, he plunged at once into the severest austerities of asceticism. We have already inserted the lively description of the inward struggles and agonies which tried him during his first retreat in the Arabian desert.

Trials of  
Jerome in  
his retreat.

But Jerome had other trials peculiar to himself. It was not so much the indulgence of the coarser passions, the lusts and ambition of the world, which distressed his religious sensibilities (1), it was the nobler and more intellectual part of his being which was endangered by the fond reminiscences of his former days. He began to question the lawfulness of those literary studies which had been the delight of his youth. He had brought with him, his sole companions, besides the sacred books of his religion, the great masters of poetry and philosophy, of Greek and Latin style; and the magic of Plato's and Cicero's language, to his refined and fastidious ear, made the sacred writings of Christianity, on which he was intently fixed, appear rude and barbarous. In his retreat in Bethlehem he had undertaken the study of Hebrew (2), as a severe occupation to withdraw him from those impure and worldly thoughts which his austerities had not entirely subdued; and in the weary hours when he was disgusted with his difficult task, he could not refrain from recurring, as a solace, to his favourite authors. But even this indulgence alarmed his jealous conscience; though he fasted before he opened his Cicero, his mind dwelt with too intense delight on the language of the orator; and the distaste with which he passed from the musical periods of Plato to the verses of the Prophets, of which his ear had not yet perceived the harmony, and his Roman taste had not perhaps imbibed the full sublimity, appeared to him as an impious offence against his religion (3). The inward struggles of his mind threw him into a fever, he was thought to be dead, and in the lethargic dream of his distempered imagination, he thought that he beheld himself before the throne of the great Judge, before the brightness of which he dared not lift up his eyes. "Who art thou?" demanded the awful voice. — "A Christian," answered the trembling Jerome (4). "'Tis false," sternly replied the voice, "thou art no Christian, thou art a Ciceronian. Where the treasure is, there is the heart also." Yet, however the scrupulous conscience

His clas-  
sical stu-  
dies.

(1) Jerome says, — "*Prima est virginitas à nativitate; secunda virginitas à secundâ nativitate;*" he ingenuously confesses that he could only boast of the second. *Epist. xxv. iv. p. 242; Op. iv. p. 459.*

(2) His description of Hebrew, as compared with Latin, is curious: — "*Ad quam edomandam, euidem fratri, qui ex Hebræis crediderat, me in disciplinam dedi ut post Quintiliani acumina, gravitatemque Frontonis, et levitatem Plinii, alphabetum discerem et stridentia anhelante verba meditarer — quid ibi laboris insumserim?*" *Epist. xcv. ad Rusticum, p. 774.*

(3) *Si quando in memet reversus, Prophetas*

*legere cœpissim, sermo horrebat incultus. Epist. xviii. ad Eustoch. iv. p. 42.*

(4) *Interin parantur exequiæ, et vitalis animæ calor, toto frigescente jam corpore, in solo tantum tepente pulvisculo, palpitabat; quum subito raptus in spiritu, ad tribunal iudicis pertrahor; ubi tantum luminis, et tantum erat ex circumstantium claritate fulgoris, ut projectus in terram, sursum aspicere non auderem. Interrogatus de conditione, Christianum me esse respondi. Et ille qui præsidebat mortuis ait, Ciceronianus es, non Christianus; ubi enim thesaurus tuus, ibi et cor tuum, Ad Eustoch. Epist. xviii. iv. p. 42*

of Jerome might tremble at this profane admixture of sacred and heathen studies, he was probably qualified in a high degree by this very discordant collision of opposite tastes for one of the great services which he was to render to Christianity. No writer, without that complete mastery over the Latin language, which could only be attained by constant familiarity with its best models, could so have harmonised its genius with the foreign elements which were to be mingled with it, as to produce the vivid and glowing style of the Vulgate Bible. That this is far removed from the purity of Tully, no one will question : we shall hereafter consider more at length its genius and its influence ; but we may conjecture what would have been the harsh, jarring, and inharmonious discord of the opposing elements, if the translator had only been conversant with the African Latinity of Tertullian, or the elaborate obscurity of writers like Ammianus Marcellinus.

Return to  
Rome.

Morality  
of the  
Roman  
clergy.

Jerome could not, in the depths of his retreat, or in the absorbing occupation of his studies, escape being involved in those controversies which distracted the Eastern churches, and penetrated to the cell of the remotest anchorite. He returned to the West to avoid the restless polemics of his brother monks. On his return to Rome, the fame of his piety and talents commended him to the confidence of the Pope Damasus (1), by whom he was employed in the most important affairs of the Roman see. But either the influence or the opinions of Jerome, excited the jealousy of the Roman clergy, whose vices Jerome paints in no softened colours. We almost, in this contest, behold a kind of prophetic prelude to the perpetual strife, which has existed in almost all ages, between the secular and regular clergy, the hierarchical and monastic spirit. Though the monastic opinions and practices were by no means unprecedented in Italy (they had been first introduced by Athanasius in his flight from Egypt) ; though they were maintained by Ambrose, and practised by some recluses ; yet the pomp, the wealth, and the authority of the Roman ecclesiastics, which is described by the concurrent testimony of the Heathen historian (2) and the Christian Jerome, would not humbly brook the greater popularity of these severer doctrines, nor patiently submit to the estrangement of some of their more opulent and distinguished proselytes, particularly among the females. Jerome admits, indeed, with specious, but doubtful humility, the inferiority of the unordained monk to the ordained priest. The clergy were the successors of the Apostles ; their lips could make the body of Christ ; they had the keys of heaven, until the day of judgment ; they were the shepherds, the monks only part of the flock. Yet the clergy, no doubt, had the sagacity to foresee the dangerous rival, as to influence and authority, which was rising

(1) Epist. xii. p. 744. Tillemont, Vie de Jerome. (2) Ammianus Marcellinus. See Postea.

Influence  
over fe-  
males of  
Rome.

up in Christian society. The great object of contention now was the command over the high-born and wealthy females of Rome. Jerome, in his advice to the clergy, cautiously warns them against the danger of female intimacy (1). He, however, either considered himself secure, or under some peculiar privilege, or justified by the prospect of greater utility, to suspend his laws on his own behalf. He became a kind of confessor, he directed the sacred studies, he overlooked the religious conduct, of more than one of these pious ladies. The ardour and vehemence with which his ascetic opinions were embraced, and the more than usually familiar intercourse with matrons and virgins of rank, may perhaps have offended the pride, if not the propriety, of Roman manners. The more temperate and rational of the clergy, in their turn, may have thought the zeal with which these female converts of Jerome were prepared to follow their teacher to the Holy Land, by no means a safe precedent; they may have taken alarm at the yet unusual fervour of language with which female ascetics were celebrated as united, by the nuptial tie, to Christ (2), and exhorted, in the glowing imagery of the Song of Solomon, to devote themselves to their spiritual spouse. They were the brides of Christ;—Christ, worshipped by angels in heaven, ought to have angels to worship him on earth (3). With regard to Jerome and his high-born friends, their suspicions were, doubtless, unjust.

Character  
of Roman  
females.

It is singular, indeed, to contrast the different descriptions of the female aristocracy of Rome, at the various periods of her history; the secluded and dignified matron, employed in household duties, and educating with severe discipline, for the military and civil service of the state, her future consuls and dictators; the gorgeous luxury, the almost incredible profligacy, of the later days of the republic and of the empire, the Julias and Messalinas, so darkly coloured by the satirists of the times; the active charity and the stern austerities of the Paulas and Eustochiums of the present period. It was not, in general, the severe and lofty Roman matron of the age of Roman virtue whom Christianity induced to abandon her domestic duties, and that highest of all duties to her country, the bringing up of noble and virtuous citizens; it was the soft, and at the same time, the savage female, who united the incongruous, but too frequently reconciled, vices of sensuality and cruelty; the female,

(1) Epist. ad Heliodorum, p. 10.

(2) See the Epistle ad Eustochium. The whole of this letter is a singular union of religious earnestness and what, to modern feeling, would seem strange indelicacy if not immodesty, with still stranger liberty with the language of Scripture. He seems to say that Eustochium was the first noble Roman maiden who embraced virginity:—"Quæ \*\* prima Romanæ urbis virgo nobilis esse cœpisti." He says, however, of Marcella,— "Nulla eo tempore nobilium feminarum

noverat Romæ propositum monacharum, nec audebat propter rei novitatem, ignominiosum, ut tunc putabatur, et vile in populis, nomen assumere." Marcellæ Epitaph. p. 780.

(3) In Jerome's larger interpretation of Solomon's Song (adv. Jovin. p. 171.) is a very curious and whimsical passage, alluding to the Saviour as the spouse. There is one sentence, however, in the letter to Eustochium, so blasphemously indecent that it must not be quoted even in Latin. p. 38.



whom the facility of divorce, if she abstained from less lawful indulgence, enabled to gratify in a more decent manner her inconstant passions; who had been inured from her most tender age, not merely to theatrical shows of questionable modesty, but to the bloody scenes of the arena, giving the signal perhaps with her own delicate hand for the mortal blow to the exhausted gladiator. We behold with wonder, not unmixed with admiration, women of the same race and city either forswearing from their earliest youth all intercourse with men, or preserving the state of widowhood with irreproachable dignity; devoting their wealth to the foundation of hospitals, and their time to religious duties and active benevolence. These monastic sentiments were carried to that excess which seemed inseparable from the Roman character. At twelve years old, the young Asella devoted herself to God; from that time she had never conversed with a man; her knees were as hard as a camel's, by constant genuflexion and prayer (1). Paula, the fervent disciple of Jerome, after devoting the wealth of an ancient and opulent house to charitable uses (2), to the impoverishing of her own children, deserted her family. Her infant son and her marriageable daughter watched, with entreating looks, her departure; she did not even turn her head away to hide her maternal tears, but lifted up her unmoistened eyes to heaven, and continued her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Jerome celebrates this sacrifice of the holiest charities of life as the height of female religious heroism (3).

Paula.

The vehement and haughty temper of Jerome was not softened by his monastic austerities, nor humbled by the severe proscription of the gentler affections. His life, in the capital and the desert, was one long warfare. After the death of his friend and protector, Damasus, the growing hostility of the clergy, notwithstanding the attachment of his disciples, rendered his residence in Rome disagreeable. Nor was the peace of the monastic life his reward for his zealous exertions in its cause. He retired to Palestine, where he passed the rest of his days in religious studies, and in polemic

Controversies of Jerome.

Retreat to Palestine.

(1) Hieronym. Epist. xxi.

(2) Jerome thus describes the charity of Paula: — Quid ego referam, amplæ et nobilis domus, et quondam opulentissima, omnes pane divitias in pauperes erogatas. Quid in cunctos clementissimum animum, et bonitatem etiam in eos quos nunquam viderat, evagantem. Quis inopiam moriens, non illius vestimentis obvolutus est? Quis clinicorum non ejus facultatibus sustentatus est? Quos curiosissimè totâ urbe perquirrens, damnâ putabat, si quis debilis et esuriens cibo sustentaretur alterius. *Spoliabat filios, et inter objurgantes propinquos, majorem se eis hæreditatem, Christi misericordiam dimittere loquebatur.* Epitaph. Paula, p. 671. At her death, Jerome relates, with great pride, that she did not leave a penny to her daughter, but a load of debts (magnum æs alienum).

(3) It is a passage of considerable beauty: — Descendit ad portum, fratre, cognatis, affinibus,

et (quod his majus est) liberis prosequentibus, et clementissimam matrem pietate vincere cupientibus. Jam carbasa tendebantur, et remorum ductu navis in altum protrahabatur. Parvus Toxotius supplices manus tendebat in littora. Rufina, jam nubilus, ut suas expectaret nuptias, tacens fletibus obsecrabat, et tamen illa siccos ad cælum oculos, pietatem in filios, pietate in Deum superans nesciebat se matrem ut Christi probaret ancillam. \* Hoc contra jura natura plena fides patiebatur, imo gaudens animus appetebat. Epitaph. Paula 672.

This was her epitaph: —

Aspicias angustum præcisâ rupe sepulcrum?  
Hospitium Paulæ est, cœlestia regna tenentis.  
Fratrem, cognatos, Roman, patriamque relinquens,  
Divitias, sobolem, Bethlehemitæ conditur antro.  
Hic præsepe tuum, Christe, atque hic mystica Magi  
Munera portantes, hominique, Deoque dedere.

Jovinian  
and Vigi-  
lantius.

disputes. Wherever any dissented from the doctrine or the practice of the dominant Christianity ventured to express his opinions, Jerome launched the thunders of his interdict from his cell at Bethlehem. No one was more perpetually involved in controversy, or opposed with greater rancour of personal hostility, than this earnest advocate of unworldly religious seclusion. He was engaged in a vehement dispute with St. Augustine, on the difference between St. Peter and St. Paul. But his repose was most embittered by the acrimonious and obstinate contest with Rufinus, which was rather a personal than a polemic strife. In one controversy, Christendom acknowledged and hailed him as her champion. Jovinian and Vigilantius are involved in the dark list of heretics; but their error appears to have been that of unwisely attempting to stem the current of popular Christian opinion, rather than any departure from the important doctrines of Christianity. They were premature Protestants; they endeavoured, with vain and ill-timed efforts, to arrest the encroaching spirit of Monachism, which had now enslaved the whole of Christianity (1); they questioned the superior merit of celibacy; they protested against the growing worship of relics (2). Their effect upon the dominant sentiment of the times may be estimated by the language of wrath, bitterness, contempt, and abhorrence with which Jerome assails these bold men, who thus presumed to encounter the spirit of their age. The four points of Jovinian's heresy, were,—1st, that virgins had no higher merit, unless superior in their good works, than widows and married women; 2d, that there was no distinction of meats; 3d, that those who had been baptized in full faith, would not be overcome by the Devil; and 4th, that those who had preserved the grace of baptism would meet with an equal reward in heaven. This last clause was perhaps a corollary from the first, as the panegyrists of virginity uniformly claimed a higher place in heaven for the immaculate than for those who had been polluted by marriage. To those doctrines Vigilantius added, if possible, more hated tenets. He condemned the respect paid to the martyrs and their relics; he questioned the miracles performed at their tombs; he condemned the lighting lamps before them as a Pagan superstition; he rejected the intercession of the saints; he blamed the custom of sending alms to Jerusalem, and the selling all property to give it to the poor; he asserted that it was better to keep it and distribute its revenues in charity; he protested against the whole monastic life, as interfering with the duty of a Christian to his neighbour. These doctrines were

(1) Hieronym. adv. Vigilantium, p. 281.

(2) The observation of Fleury shows how mistimed was the attempt of Vigilantius to return to the simpler Christianity of former days: — “On ne voit pas que l'hérésie (de Vigilance), ait eu de suite, ni qu'on ait eu besoin d'aucun concile pour la condamner tant elle étoit con-

traire à la tradition de l'Eglise Universelle.” Tom. v. p. 278.

I have purposely, lest I should overstrain the Protestantism of these remarkable men, taken this view of their tenets from Fleury, perhaps the fairest and most dispassionate writer of his church. Tom. iv. p. 602.; tom. v. p. 275.

not without their followers; the resentment of Jerome was embittered by their effect on some of the noble ladies of Rome, who began to fall off to marriage. Even some bishops embraced the doctrines of Vigilantius, and asserting that the high professions of continence led the way to debauchery, refused to ordain unmarried deacons.

The tone of Jerome's indignant writings against those new heretics is that of a man suddenly arrested in his triumphant career by some utterly unexpected opposition; his resentment at being thus crossed is mingled with a kind of wonder that men should exist who could entertain such strange and daring tenets. The length, it might be said the prolixity, to which he draws out his answer to Jovinian, seems rather the outpouring of his wrath and his learning, than as if he considered it necessary to refute such obvious errors. Throughout it is the master condescending to teach, not the adversary to argue. He fairly overwhelms him with a mass of scripture, and of classical learning: at one time he pours out a flood of allegorical interpretations of the scripture; he then confounds him with a clever passage from Theophrastus on the miseries of marriage. Even the friends of Jerome, the zealous Panmachius himself, were offended by the fierceness of his first invective against Jovinian (1), and his contemptuous disparagement of marriage. The injustice of his personal charges are refuted by the more temperate statements of Augustine and by his own admissions (2). He was obliged, in his apology, to mitigate his vehemence, and reluctantly to fall into a milder strain; but even the Apology has something of the severe and contemptuous tone of an orator who is speaking on the popular side, with his audience already in his favour.

But his language to Jovinian is sober, dispassionate, and argumentative, in comparison with that to Vigilantius. He describes all the monsters ever invented by poetic imagination, the centaurs, the leviathan, the Nemean lion, Cacus, Geryon. Gaul, by her one monster, Vigilantius (3), had surpassed all the pernicious and portentous horrors of other regions. "Why do I fly to the desert?—That I may not see or hear thee; that I may no longer be moved

Vigilantius.

(1) Indignamini mihi, quod Jovinianum non docuerim, sed vicerim. Imo indignantur mihi qui illum anathematizatum dolent. Apolog. p. 236.

(2) Jerome admits that Jovinian did not assert the privilege which he vindicated; he remained a monk, though Jerome highly colours his luxurious habits. After his coarse tunic and *bare* feet, and food of bread and water, he has betaken himself to white garments, sweetened wine, and highly dressed meats: to the sauces of an Apicius or a Paxamus, to baths, and sham-pooings (*fritriculae*, — the Benedictines translate this fritter shops), and cooks' shops, it is manifest that he prefers earth to heaven, vice to virtue, his belly to Christ, and thinks his rubicund colour (*Purpuram coloris ejus*) the kingdom of

heaven. Yet this handsome, this corpulent, smooth monk, always goes in white like a bridegroom: let him marry a wife to prove the equal value of virginity and marriage; but if he will not take a wife, though he is against us in his words, his actions are for us. He afterwards says, — Ille Romanæ ecclesiæ auctoritate damnatus inter fluviæ aves, et carnes suillas, non tam emisit animam quam eructavit. p. 183.

(3) His brief sketch of the enormities of Vigilantius is as follows: — Qui immundo spiritu pugnat contra Christi spiritum, et martyrum negat sepulcra esse veneranda; damandas dicit esse vigilias; nunquam nisi in Pascha Alleluia cantandum: continentiam hæresim, pudicitiam libidinis seminarium.



by thy madness, nor be provoked to war by thee; lest the eye of a harlot should captivate me, and a beautiful form seduce me to unlawful love." But his great and conclusive argument in favour of reverence for the dust of martyrs (that little dust which, covered with a precious veil, Vigilantius presumed to think but dust) is universal authority. "Was the Emperor Constantine sacrilegious, who transported the relics of Andrew, Luke, and Timothy to Constantinople, at whose presence the devils (such devils as inhabit the wretched Vigilantius) roar, and are confounded? or the Emperor Arcadius, who translated the bones of the holy Samuel to Thrace? Are all the bishops sacrilegious who enshrined these precious remains in silk, as a vessel of gold; and all the people who met them, and received them as it were the living prophet? Is the Bishop of Rome, who offers sacrifice on the altar under which are the venerable bones (the vile dust, would Vigilantius say?) of Peter and Paul; and not the bishop of one city alone, but the bishops of all the cities in the world who reverence these relics, around which the souls of the martyrs are constantly hovering to hear the prayers of the suppliant?"

The great work of Jerome, the authoritative Latin version of the scriptures, will demand our attention, as one of the primary elements of Christian literature, a subject which must form one most important branch of our inquiry into the extent and nature of the general revolution in the history of mankind, brought about by the complete establishment of Christianity.

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## BOOK IV.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE ROMAN EMPIRE UNDER CHRISTIANITY.

THE period is now arrived when we may survey the total change in the habits and manners, as well as in the sentiments and opinions, of mankind, effected by the dominance of the new faith. Christianity is now the mistress of the Roman world; on every side the struggles of Paganism become more feeble; it seems resigned to its fate, or rather only hopes, by a feigned allegiance, and a simulation of the forms and language of Christianity, to be permitted to drag on a precarious and inglorious existence. The Christians are now no longer a separate people, founding and maintaining their small independent republics, fenced in by marked peculiarities of habits and manners from the rest of society; they have become to all outward appearance *the people*; the general manners of the world may be contemplated as the manners of Christendom. The monks, and in some respects the clergy, have, as it were, taken the place of the Christians as a separate and distinct body of men; the latter in a great degree, the former altogether differing from the prevalent usages in their modes of life, and abstaining from the common pursuits and avocations of society. The Christian writers, therefore, become our leading, almost our only, authorities for the general habits and manners of mankind (for the notice of such matters in the Heathen writers are few and casual), except the Theodosian code. This indeed is of great value as a record of manners as well as a history of legislation; for that which demands the prohibition of the law, or is in any way of sufficient importance to require the notice of the legislature, may be considered as a prevalent custom: particularly as the Theodosian code is not a system of abstract and general law, but the register of the successive edicts of the Emperors who were continually supplying, by their arbitrary acts, the deficiencies of the existing statutes, or as new cases arose, adapting those statutes to temporary exigencies.

General survey of the change effected by Christianity.

Sources of information.

Theodosian code.

But the Christian preachers are the great painters of Roman manners; Chrysostom of the East, more particularly of Constantinople; Jerome, and though much less copiously, Ambrose and Augustine, of Roman Christendom. Considerable allowance must,

Christian writers.

of course, be made in all these statements for oratorical vehemence ; much more for the ascetic habits of the writers, particularly of Chrysostom, who maintained, and would have exacted, the rigid austerity of the desert in the midst of a luxurious capital. Nor must the general morality of the times be estimated from their writings without considerable discretion. It is the office of the preacher, though with a different design, yet with something of the manner of the satirist, to select the vices of mankind for his animadversion, and to dwell with far less force on the silent and unpretending virtues. There might be, and probably was, an under-current of quiet Christian piety and gentleness, and domestic happiness, which would not arrest the notice of the preacher, who was denouncing the common pride and luxury ; or if kindling into accents of praise, enlarging on the austere self-denial of the anchorite, or the more shining virtues of the saint.

Christianity disturbed not the actual relations of society, it interfered in no way with the existing gradations of rank ; though, as we shall see, it introduced a new order of functionaries, — what may be considered from the estimation in which they were held a new aristocracy, — it left all the old official dignitaries in possession of their distinctions. With the great vital distinction between the freeman and the slave, as yet it made no difference (1). It broke down none of the barriers which separated this race of men from the common rights of human kind ; and in no degree legally brought up this Pariah caste of antiquity to the common level of the human race.

In the new relation established between mankind and the Supreme Being, the slave was fully participant, he shared in the redemption through Christ, he might receive all the spiritual blessings, and enjoy all the immortalising hopes of the believer ; he might be dismissed from his death-bed to heaven by the absolving voice of the priest ; and besides this inestimable consolation in misery and degradation, this religious equality, at least with the religious part of the community, could not fail to elevate his condition, and to strengthen that claim to the sympathies of mankind which were enforced by Christian humanity. The axiom of Clement of Alexandria that by the common law of Christian charity, we were to act to them as we would be acted by, because they were men (2), though perhaps it might have been uttered with equal strength of language by some of the better philosophers, spoke with far more general acceptance to the human heart. The manumission, which was permitted by Constantine to take place in the Church, must likewise have tended indirectly to connect freedom with Christianity (3).

(1) The laws of Justinian, it must be remembered, are beyond this period.

(2) Clemens Alex. *Pædagog.* iii. 12.

(3) See Blair on Slavery. p. 288.



Still, down to the time of Justinian, the inexorable law, which, as to their treatment, had already been wisely tempered by the Heathen Emperors, as to their *rights*, pronounced the same harsh and imperious sentence. It beheld them as an inferior class of human beings; their life was placed but partially under the protection of the law. If they died under a punishment of extraordinary cruelty, the master was guilty of homicide; if under more moderate application of the scourge, or any other infliction, the master was not accountable for their death (1). While it refused to protect, the law inflicted on the slave punishments disproportionate to those of the freeman. If he accused his master for any crime, except high treason, he was to be burned (2); if free women married slaves, they sank to the abject state of their husbands, and forfeited their rights as free women (3); if a free woman intrigued with a slave, she was capitally punished, the slave was burned (4).

The possession of slaves was in no degree limited by law. It was condemned as a mark of inordinate luxury, but by no means as in itself contrary to Christian justice or equity (5).

On the pomp and magnificence of the court, Christianity either did not aspire, or despaired of enforcing moderation or respect for the common dignity of mankind. The manners of the East, as the Emperor took up his residence in Constantinople, were too strong for the religion. With the first Christian Emperor commenced that Oriental ceremonial, which it might almost seem, that, rebuked by the old liberties of Rome, the imperial despot would not assume till he had founded another capital, or at least, if the first groundwork of this Eastern pomp was laid by Dioclesian, Rome had already been deserted, and was not insulted by the open degradation of the first men in the empire to the language, attitudes, and titles of servitude.

Manners  
of the  
court.

The eunuchs, who, however admitted in solitary instances to the confidence or favour of the earlier Emperors, had never formed a party, or handed down to each other the successive administrations, now ruled in almost uncontested sovereignty, and except in some rare instances, seemed determined not to incur, without deserving, the antipathy and contempt of mankind. The luxury and prodigality of the court equalled its pomp and its servility. The parsimonious reformation introduced by Julian may exaggerate in its contemptuous expressions the thousand cooks, the thousand barbers, and more than a thousand cupbearers, with the host of eunuchs and drones of every description who lived at the charge of the Emperor Constantius (6). The character of Theodosius gave an imposing

Govern-  
ment of  
the eu-  
nuchs.

(1) Cod. Theodos. ix. 12. 1.

(2) Cod. Theodos. ix. 6. 2.

(3) Ibid. ix. 9. 1, 2, 3.

(4) Ibid. ix. 11. 1.

(5) Clemens. Alex. Pædagog. iii. 12. It is cu-

rious to compare this passage of Clement with the beautiful essay of Seneca. See likewise Chrysostom, almost *passim*. Some had 2000 or 3000. t. vii. p. 633.

(6) Libanius, Epitaph. Julian. p. 565.

The Em-  
peror.

dignity to his resumption of that magnificence of which Julian, not without affectation, had displayed his disdain. The Heathen writers, perhaps with the design of contrasting Theodosius with the severer Julian, who are the representatives, or at least, each the pride of the opposing parties, describe the former as immoderately indulging in the pleasures of the table, and of re-enlisting in the imperial service a countless multitude of cooks and other attendants on the splendour and indulgence of the court (1). That which in Theodosius was the relaxation or the reward for military services, and the cares and agitations of an active administration, degenerated with his feeble sons into indolent and effeminate luxury. The head of the empire became a secluded Asiatic despot. When, on rare occasion, Arcadius condescended to reveal to the public the majesty of the sovereign, he was preceded by a vast multitude of attendants, dukes, tribunes, civil and military officers, their horses glittering with golden ornaments, with shields of gold, set with precious stones, and golden lances. They proclaimed the coming of the Emperor, and commanded the ignoble crowd to clear the streets before him (2). The Emperor stood or reclined on a gorgeous chariot surrounded by his immediate attendants distinguished by shields with golden bosses set round with golden eyes, and drawn by white mules with gilded trappings; the chariot was set with precious stones, and golden fans vibrated with the movement, and cooled the air. The multitude contemplated at a distance the snow-white cushions, the silken carpets with dragons enwoven upon them in rich colours. Those who were fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of the Emperor beheld his ears loaded with golden rings, his arms with golden chains, his diadem set with gems of all hues, his purple robes, which with the diadem, were reserved for the Emperor, in all their sutures embroidered with precious stones. The wondering people, on their return to their homes, could talk of nothing but the splendour of the spectacle, the robes, the mules, the carpets, the size and splendour of the jewels. On his return to the palace, the Emperor walked on gold; ships were employed with the express purpose of bringing gold dust (3) from remote provinces, which was strewn by the officious care of a host of attendants, so that the Emperor rarely set his foot on the bare pavement.

The aris-  
tocracy.

The official aristocracy, which had succeeded to the hereditary patriciate of Rome, reflected in more moderate splendour, and less unapproachable seclusion, the manners of the court. The chief civil offices were filled by men of ignoble birth, often eunuchs, who, by

(1) Zosimus, iv. 28.

(2) Montfaucon, in an essay in the last volume of the works of Chrysostom, and in the twelfth vol. of the *Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions*; and Muller, in his *traité de Ge-*

*nia, Moribus, et Luxu Aevi Theodosiani*, have collected the principal features of this picture, chiefly from Chrysostom.

(3) *Χρυσόνιον*. See Muller, p. 10.

the prodigal display of their ill-acquired wealth, insulted the people, who admired, envied, and hated their arrogant state. The military officers, in the splendour of their trappings and accoutrements, vied with the gorgeousness of the court favourites; and even the barbarians, who began to force their way by their valour to these posts, in the capital, caught the infection of luxury and pomp. As in all despotisms, especially in the East, there was a rapid rise and fall of unworthy favourites, whose vices, exactions, and oppressions, were unsparingly laid open by hostile writers, directly they had lost the protecting favour of the court. Men then found out that the enormous wealth, the splendour, the voluptuousness, in which an Eutropius or a Rufinus had indulged, had been obtained by the sale of appointments, by vast bribes from provincial governors, by confiscations, and every abuse of inordinate power (1).

Christianity had not the power to elevate despotism into a wise and beneficent rule, nor to dignify its inseparable consequence, court favouritism; yet after all, feeble and contemptible as are many of the Christian Emperors, pusillanimous even in their vices; odious as was the tyranny of their ministers; they may bear no unfavourable comparison with the Heathen Emperors of Rome. Human nature is not so outraged; our belief in the possible depravity of man is not so severely tried, as by the monstrous vices and cruelties of a Tiberius, a Caligula, or a Nero. Theodora, even, if we credit the malignant satire of Procopius, maintained some decency upon the throne. The superstitions of the Emperors debased Christianity; the Christian bishop was degraded by being obliged at times to owe his promotion to an eunuch or a favourite; yet even the most servile and intriguing of the hierarchy could not be entirely forgetful of their high mission; there was still a kind of moral repugnance, inseparable from the character they bore, which kept them above the general debasement.

The aristocratical life, at this period, seems to have been characterised by gorgeous magnificence without grandeur, inordinate luxury without refinement, the pomp and prodigality of a high state of civilisation with none of its ennobling or humanising effects. The walls of the palaces were lined with marbles of all colours, crowded with statues of inferior workmanship, mosaics, of which the merit consisted in the arrangement of the stones; the cost, rather than the beauty or elegance, was the test of excellence, and the object of admiration. They were surrounded with hosts of parasites or servants. "You reckon up," Chrysostom thus addresses a patrician, "so many acres of land, ten or twenty palaces, as many

Manners  
of the aris-  
tocracy.

(1) Ille Asiam villâ pactus regit; ille redemit  
Conjugis ornatu Syriam; dolet ille paternâ  
Bithynos mutasse domo. Suffixa patenti  
Vestibulo pretiis distinguit regula gentes.  
Claud. in Eutrop. l. 199.

clientes  
Fallit, et ambitos a principe vendit honores.

Congeste cumulantur opes, orbisque rapinas  
Accipit una domus. Populi servire coacti  
Plenaque privato succumbunt oppida regno.

In Rufin. l. 179-182.



baths, a thousand or two thousand slaves, chariots plated with silver or overlaid with gold (1).”

Females.

Their banquets were merely sumptuous, without social grace or elegance. The dress of the females, the fondness for false hair, sometimes wrought up to an enormous height, and especially affecting the golden dye, and for paint, from which irresistible propensities they were not to be estranged even by religion, excite the stern animadversion of the ascetic Christian teacher. “What business have rouge and paint on a Christian cheek? Who can weep for her sins when her tears wash her face bare and mark furrows on her skin? With what trust can faces be lifted up towards heaven, which the Maker cannot recognise as his workmanship (2)?” Their necks, heads, arms, and fingers, were loaded with golden chains and rings; their persons breathed precious odours, their dresses were of gold stuff and silk; and in this attire they ventured to enter the church. Some of the wealthier Christian matrons gave a religious air to their vanity, while the more profane wore their thin silken dresses embroidered with hunting-pieces, wild beasts, or any other fanciful device; the more pious had the miracles of Christ, the marriage in Cana of Galilee, or the paralytic carrying his bed. In vain the preachers urged that it would be better to emulate these acts of charity and love, than to wear them on their garments (3).

It might indeed be supposed that Christianity, by the extinction of that feeling for the beauty, grandeur, and harmony of outward form, which was a part of the religion of Greece, and was enforced by her purer and loftier philosophy, may have contributed to this total depravation of the taste. Those who had lost the finer feeling for the pure and noble in art and in social life, would throw themselves into the gorgeous, the sumptuous, and the extravagant. But it was rather the Roman character than the influence of Christianity which was thus fatal to the refinements of life. The degeneracy of taste was almost complete before the predominance of the new religion. The manners of ancient Rome had descended from the earlier empire (4), and the manners of Constantinople were in most respects an elaborate imitation of those of Rome.

The provincial cities, according to the national character, imitated the old and new Rome; and in all, no doubt the nobility, or the higher order, were of the same character and habits.

On the appointment to the provincial governments, and the high civil offices of the empire, Christianity at this time exercised by no

(1) T. vii. p. 533.

(2) Hieronym. Epist. 54. Compare Epist. 19. vol. i. p. 284.

(3) Muller, p. 112. There are several statutes prohibiting the use of gold brocade or dresses of silk in the Theodosian Code, x. tit. 20.

Other statutes regulate the dress in Rome, xiv. 10. 1.

(4) Compare the description of the manners and habits of the Roman nobles in Ammianus Marcellinus, so well transferred into English in the 31st chapter of Gibbon, vol. v. p. 258—268.

means a commanding, certainly no exclusive, influence. Either superior merit, or court intrigue, or favour, bestowed civil offices with impartial hand on Christian and Pagan. The Rufinus or the Eutropius cared little whether the bribe was offered by a worshipper in the church or in the temple. The Heathen Themistius was appointed prefect of Constantinople by the intolerant Theodosius; Prætextatus and Symmachus held the highest civil functions in Rome. The prefect who was so obstinate an enemy to Chrysostom was Optatus, a Pagan. At a later period, as we have observed, a statue was raised to the Heathen poet Merobaudes.

But, besides the officers of the imperial government, of the provinces and the municipalities, there now appeared a new order of functionaries, with recognised, if undefined powers, the religious magistrates of the religious community. In this magisterial character, the new hierarchy differed from the ancient priesthoods, at least of Greece and Rome. In Greece, they were merely the officiating dignitaries in the religious ceremonial; in Rome, the pontifical was attached to, and in effect merged in, the important civil function. But Christianity had its own distinct and separate aristocracy, which not merely officiated in the church, but ruled the public mind, and mingled itself with the various affairs of life, far beyond this narrow sphere of religious ministration.

The Christian hierarchy was completely organised and established in the minds of men before the great revolutions which, under Constantine, legalised Christianity, and, under Theodosius and his successors, identified the Church and State. The strength of the sacerdotal power was consolidated before it came into inevitable collision, or had to dispute its indefinable limits with the civil authority. Mankind was now submitted to a double dominion, the civil supremacy of the Emperor and his subordinate magistrates, and that of the Bishop with his inferior priesthood.

Up to the establishment of Christianity, the clerical order had been the sole magistracy of the new communities. But it is not alone from the scantiness of authentic documents concerning the earliest Christian history, but from the inevitable nature of things, that the development of the hierarchical power, as has already been partially shown (1), was gradual and untraceable. In the infant Christian community, we have seen that the chief teacher and the ruler, almost immediately, if not immediately, became the same person. It was not so much that he was formally invested in authority, as that his advice, his guidance, his control, were sought on all occasions with timid diffidence, and obeyed with unhesitating submission. In the Christian, if it may be so said, the civil was merged in the religious being; he abandoned willingly his rights as

Gradual  
develop-  
ment of  
the hier-  
archical  
power.

(1) Book ii. ch. 4.

a citizen, almost as a man, his independence of thought and action, in order to be taught conformity to the new doctrines which he had embraced, and the new rule of life to which he had submitted himself. Community of sentiment, rather than any strict federal compact, was the primary bond of the Christian republic; and this general sentiment, even prior, perhaps, to any formal nomination or ordination, designated the heads and the subordinate rulers, the Bishops, the Presbyters, and the Deacons; and therefore, where all agreed, there was no question in whom resided the right of conferring the title (1).

The simple ceremonial of "laying on of hands," which dedicated the individual for his especial function, ratified and gave its religious character to this popular election which took place by a kind of silent acclamation; and without this sacred commission by the bishop, no one, from the earliest times of which we have any record, presumed, it should seem, to invest himself in the sacred office (2). The civil and religious power of the hierarchy grew up side by side, or intertwined with each other, by the same spontaneous vital energy. Every thing in the primary formation of the communities tended to increase the power of their ecclesiastical superiors. The investiture of the blended teacher and ruler in a sacred, and at length in a sacerdotal character, the rigid separation of this sacred order from the mass of the believers, could not but arise out of the unavoidable development of the religion. It was not their pride or ambition that withdrew them, but the reverence of the people which enshrined them in a separate sphere: they did not usurp or even assume their power and authority; it was heaped upon them by the undoubting and prodigal confidence of the community. The hopes and fears of men would have forced this honour upon them, had they been humbly reluctant to accept it. Man, in his state of religious excitement, imperiously required some authorised interpreters of those mysterious revelations from heaven which he could read himself but imperfectly and obscurely; he felt the pressing necessity of a spiritual guide. The privileges and distinctions of the clergy, so far from being aggressions on his religious independence, were solemn responsibilities undertaken for the general benefit. The Christian commonalty, according to the general sentiment, could not have existed without them, nor could such necessary but grave functions be entrusted to casual or common hands. No individual felt himself safe, except under their

(1) The growth of the Christian hierarchy, and the general constitution of the Church, are developed with learning, candour, and moderation, by Planck, in his *Geschichte der Christlich-Kirchlichen Verfassung*. Hanover, 1803.

(2) Gradually the admission to orders became a subject not merely of ecclesiastical, but of civil regulation. It has been observed that the decurion was prohibited from taking orders in order to obtain exemption from the duties of his station. *Cod. Theod.* xii. 1. 49. No slave, curialis,

officer of the court, public debtor, procurator, or collector of the purple dye (*marilegulus*), or one involved in business, might be ordained, or, if ordained, might be reclaimed to his former state. *Cod. Theod.* ix. 45. 3. This was a law of the close of the fourth century, *A. D.* 398. The Council of Illiberis had made a restriction that no freedman, whose patron was a Gentile, could be ordained; he was still too much under control. *Can.* lxxx.



superintendence. Their sole right of entering the sanctuary arose as much out of the awe of the people as their own self-invested holiness of character. The trembling veneration for the mysteries of the sacrament must by no means be considered as an artifice to exalt themselves as the sole guardians and depositaries of these blessings; it was the genuine expression of their own profoundest feelings. If they had not assumed the keys of heaven and hell; if they had not appeared legitimately to possess the power of pronouncing the eternal destiny of man, to suspend or excommunicate from those Christian privileges which were inseparably connected in Christian belief with the eternal sentence, or to absolve and readmit into the pale of the Church and of salvation,—among the mass of believers, the uncertainty, the terror, the agony of minds fully impressed with the conviction of their immortality, and yearning by every means to obtain the assurance of pardon and peace, with heaven and hell constantly before their eyes, and agitating their inmost being, would have been almost insupportable. However they might exaggerate their powers, they could not extend them beyond the ready acquiescence of the people. They could not possess the power of absolving without that of condemning; and men were content to brave the terrors of the gloomier award, for the indescribable consolations and confidence in their brighter and more ennobling promises.

The change in the relative position of Christianity to the rest of the world tended to the advancement of the hierarchy. At first there was no necessity to guard the admission into the society with rigid or suspicious jealousy, since the profession of Christianity in the face of a hostile world was in itself almost a sufficient test of sincerity. Expulsion from the society, or a temporary exclusion from its privileges, which afterwards grew into the awful forms of interdict or excommunication, must have been extremely rare or unnecessary (1), since he who could not endure the discipline, or who doubted again the doctrines of Christianity, had nothing to do but to abandon a despised sect and revert to the freedom of the world. The older and more numerous the community, severer regulations were requisite for the admission of members, the maintenance of order, of unity in doctrine, and propriety of conduct, as well as for the ejection of unworthy disciples. As men began to be Christians, not from personal conviction, but from hereditary descent, as children of Christian parents; as the Church was filled with doubtful converts, some from the love of novelty,

Expulsion  
or excom-  
munica-  
tion.

(1) The case in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. v. 5.), which seems to have been the first of forcible expulsion, was obviously an act of *Apostolic* authority. This, it is probable, was a Jewish convert; and these persons stood in a peculiar position; they would be ashamed, or would not be permitted, to return into the bosom

of the Jewish community, which they had abandoned, and, if expelled from the Christian Church, would be complete outcasts. Not so the Heathen apostate, who might one day leave, and the next return, to his old religion, with all its advantages.

others, when they incurred less danger and obloquy, from less sincere faith; some, no doubt, of the base and profligate, from the desire of partaking in the well-known charity of the Christians to their poorer brethren; many would become Christians, having just strength of mind enough to embrace its tenets, but not to act up to its duties; a more severe investigation, therefore, became necessary for admission into the society, a more summary authority for the expulsion of improper members (1). These powers naturally devolved on the heads of the community, who had either originally possessed, and transmitted by regularly appointed descent, or held by general consent, the exclusive administration of the religious rites, the sacraments, which were the federal bonds of the community. Their strictly civil functions became likewise more extensive and important. All legal disputes had, from the first, been submitted to the religious magistracy, not as interpreters of the laws of the empire, but as best acquainted with the higher principles of natural justice and Christian equity. The religious heads of the communities were the supreme and universally recognised arbiters in all the transactions of life. When the magistrate became likewise a Christian, and the two communities were blended into one, considerable difficulty could not but arise, as we shall hereafter see, in the limits of their respective jurisdictions.

But the magisterial or ruling part of the ecclesiastical function became thus more and more relatively important; government gradually became an affair of asserted superiority on one hand, of exacted submission on the other; but still the general voice would long be in favour of the constituted authorities. The episcopal power would be a mild, a constitutional, an unoppressive, and therefore unquestioned and unlimited sovereignty; for, in truth, in the earlier period, what was the bishop, and in a subordinate degree, the presbyter, or even the deacon?—He was the religious superior, elected by general acclamation, or at least, by general consent, as commanding that station by his unrivalled religious qualifications; he was solemnly invested in his office by a religious ceremony; he was the supreme arbiter in such civil matters as occurred among the members of the body, and thus the conservator of peace; he was the censor of morals, the minister in holy rites, the instructor in the doctrines of the faith, the adviser in all scruples, the consoler in all sorrows; he was the champion of the truth, in the hour of trial the first victim of persecution, the designated

(1) It is curious to find that both ecclesiastical and civil laws against apostasy were constantly necessary. The Council of Elvira re-admits an apostate to communion, who has not worshipped idols, after ten years' penance. The laws of Gratian and Theodosius, and even of Arcadius and Valentinian III., speak a more menacing language: the Christian who has become a Pagan forfeits the right of bequeathing by will—his

will is null and void. Cod. Theod. xvi. 7. 1. 22. A law of Valentinian II. inflicts the same penalty (only with some limitation) on apostates to Judaism or Manicheism. The laws of Arcadius and Valentinian III. prove, by the severity of their prohibitions, not only that cases of apostasy took place, but that sacrifices were still frequently offered. Cod. Theodos. xvi. tit. de Apostatis.

martyr. Of a being so sanctified, so ennobled to the thought, what jealous suspicion would arise, what power would be withholden from one whose commission would seem ratified by the Holy Spirit of God. Power might generate ambition, distinction might be attended by pride, but the transition would not be perceived by the dazzled sight of respect, of reverence, of veneration, and of love.

The bishop in the early community.

Above all, diversities of religious opinion would tend to increase the influence and the power of those who held the religious supremacy. It has been said, not without some authority, that the establishment of episcopacy in the Apostolic times arose for the control of the differences with the Judaizing converts (1). The multitude of believers would take refuge under authority from the doubts and perplexities thus cast among them; they would be grateful to men who would think for them, and in whom their confidence might seem to be justified by their station; a formulary of faith for such persons would be the most acceptable boon to the Christian society. This would be more particularly the case when, as in the Asiatic communities, they were not merely slight and unimportant, but vital points of difference. The Gnosticism, which the bishops of Asia Minor and of Syria had to combat, was not a Christian sect or heresy, but another religion, although speaking in some degree Christian language. The justifiable alarm of these dangerous encroachments would induce the teachers and governors to assume a loftier and more dictatorial tone; those untainted by the new opinions would vindicate and applaud their acknowledged champions and defenders. Hence we account for the strong language in the Epistles of Ignatius, which appears to claim the extraordinary rank of actual representatives, not merely of the Apostles, but of Christ himself, for the bishops, precisely in this character, as maintainers of the true Christian doctrine (2).

Dissensions in the Church cause of increase of sacerdotal power.

(1) No doubt this kind of constant and of natural appeal to the supreme religious functionary must have materially tended to strengthen and confirm this power. See vol. i. page 278. and note.

(2) My own impression is decidedly in favour of the genuineness of these Epistles,—the shorter ones I mean—which are vindicated by Pearson; nor do I suspect that these passages, which are too frequent, and too much in the style and spirit of the whole, are later interpolations. Certainly the fact of the existence of two different copies of these Epistles throws doubt on the genuineness of both; but I receive them partly from an historical argument, which I have suggested, vol. i. p. 320.; partly from internal evidence. Some of their expressions, *e. g.*, “Be ye subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ” (ad Trall. c. 2); “Follow your bishop as Jesus Christ the Father, the presbytery as the Apostles; reverence the deacons as the ordinance of God” (ad Smyrn. c. 8.); taken as detached sentences, and without regard to the figurative style and ardent manner of the writer, would seem so extraordinary a transition from the tone of the Apostles, as to throw still further doubts

on the authenticity at least of these sentences. But it may be observed that in these strong expressions the object of the writer does not seem to be to raise the sacerdotal power, but rather to enforce Christian unity, with direct reference to these fatal differences of doctrine. In another passage he says, “Be ye subject to the Bishop and to each other (τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ καὶ ἀλλήλοις), as Jesus Christ to the Father, and the Apostles to Christ, to the Father and to the Spirit.”

I cannot indeed understand the inference that all the language or tenets of Christians who may have heard the Apostles are to be considered of Apostolic authority. Ignatius was a vehement and strongly figurative writer, very different in his tone, according to my judgment, to the Apostolic writings. His eager desire for martyrdom; his deprecating the interference of the Roman Christians in his behalf, is remarkably at variance with the sober dignity with which the Apostles did not seek, but submitted to death. That which may have been high-wrought metaphor in Ignatius, is repeated by the Author of the Apostolic Constitutions, without reserve or



In the pseudo-Apostolic Constitutions, which belong probably to the latter end of the third century, this more than Apostolic authority is sternly and unhesitatingly asserted (1). Thus, the separation between the clergy and laity continually widened; the teacher or ruler of the community became the dictator of doctrine, the successor, not of the bishop appointed by Apostolic authority (2), or according to Apostolic usage, but the Apostle; and at length took on himself a sacerdotal name and dignity. A strong corporate spirit, which arises out of associations formed for the noblest as well as for the most unworthy objects, could not but actuate the hierarchical college which was formed in each diocese or each city by the bishop and more or less numerous presbyters and deacons. The control on the autocracy of the bishop, which was exercised by this senate of presbyters, without whom he rarely acted, tended to strengthen, rather than to invalidate, the authority of the general body, in which all particular and adverse interests were absorbed in that of the clerical order (3).

Language  
of the Old  
Testa-  
ment.

Clergy  
and laity.

The language of the Old Testament, which was received perhaps with greater readiness, from the contemptuous aversion in which it was held by the Gnostics, on this as on other subjects, gradually found its way into the Church (4). But the strong and marked line between the ministerial or magisterial order (the clergy) and the inferior Christians, the people (the laity), had been drawn before the bishop became a pontiff (for the Heathen names were likewise used), the presbyters, the sacerdotal order, and the deacons, a class of men who shared in the indelible sanctity of the new priesthood. The common priesthood of all Christians, as distinguishing them by their innocent and dedicated character from the profane Heathen, asserted in the Epistle of St. Peter, was the only notion of the sacerdotal character at first admitted into the popular sentiment (5). The appellation of the sacerdotal order began to be metaphorically applied to the Christian clergy (6), but soon became

limitation. This, I think, may be fairly taken as indicative of the language prevalent at the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century, — ὑμῖν ὁ ἐπίσκοπος εἰς Θεὸν τιμηθήσθω. The bishop is to be honoured as God. ii. 30. The language of Psalm lxxxi. "Ye are Gods," is applied to them:—they are as much greater than the king as the soul is superior to the body, — στέργειν ὀφειλέτε ὡς πατέρα, — φοβεῖσθαι ὡς βασιλέα.

(1) Οὗτος ὑμῖν ἐπίγειος Θεὸς μετὰ Οεοῦ. Lib. ii. c. 26.

(2) The full Apostolic authority was claimed for the bishops, I think, first distinctly, at a later period. See the letter from Firmilianus in Cyprian's works, Epist. lxxv. Potestas peccatorum remittendorum Apostolis data est \* \* et episcopis qui eis vicariâ ordinatione succedunt.

(3) Even Cyprian enforces his own authority by that of his concurrent College of Presbyters:

—Quando à primordio episcopatus mei statuerem, nihil sine consilio vestro, et cum consensu plebis, meâ privatim sententiâ gerere. Epist. v. In other passages he says, Cui rei non potui me solum iudicem dare. He had acted, therefore, cum collegis meis, et cum plebe ipsâ universâ. Epist. xxviii.

(4) It is universally adopted in the Apostolic Constitutions. The crime of Korah is significantly adduced; tithes are mentioned, I believe, for the first time, ii. 25. Compare vi. 2.

(5) See the well-known passage of Tertullian: — Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus? \* \* Differentiam inter ordinem et plebem constituit ecclesie auctoritas. Tertullian evidently Montanises in this treatise, de Exhort. Castit. c. 7., yet seems to deliver these as maxims generally acknowledged.

(6) We find the first appearance of this in the figurative Ignatius. Tertullian uses the term summi Sacerdotes.

real titles ; and by the close of the third century, they were invested in the names and claimed the rights of the Levitical priesthood in the Jewish theocracy (1). The Epistle of Cyprian to Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, shows the height to which the episcopal power had aspired before the religion of Christ had become that of the Roman empire. The passages of the Old Testament, and even of the New, in which honour or deference are paid to the Hebrew pontificate, are recited in profuse detail ; implicit obedience is demanded for the priest of God, who is the sole infallible judge or delegate of Christ (2).

Even if it had been possible that, in their state of high-wrought attachment and reverence for the teachers and guardians of their religion, any mistrust could have arisen in the more sagacious and far-sighted minds of the vast system of sacerdotal domination, of which they were thus laying the deep foundations in the Roman world, there was no recollection or tradition of any priestly tyranny from which they could take warning or imbibe caution. These sacerdotal castes were obsolete or Oriental ; the only one within their sphere of knowledge was that of the Magians in the hostile kingdom of Persia. In Greece, the priesthood had sunk into the neglected ministers of the deserted temples ; their highest dignity was to preside over the amusements of the people. The Emperor had now at length disdainfully cast off the supreme pontificate of the Heathen world, which had long been a title, and nothing more. Even among the Jews, the rabbinical hierarchy, which had gained considerable strength, even during our Saviour's time, but after the fall of the temple, and the publication of the Talmuds, had assumed a complete despotism over the Jewish mind, was not a priesthood ; the rabbins came promiscuously from all the tribes ; their claims rested on learning and on knowledge of the traditions of the Fathers, not on Levitical descent.

Nor indeed could any danger be apparent, so long as the free voice of the community, guided by fervent piety, and rarely perverted by less worthy motives, summoned the wisest and the holiest to these important functions. The nomination to the sacred office experienced the same, more gradual, perhaps, but not less inevitable, change from the popular to the self electing form. The acclamation of the united, and seldom, if ever, discordant voices of the presbyters and the people might be trusted with the appointment to the headship of a poor and devout community, whose utmost desire

(1) The passage in the Epistle of Clemens (ad Roman. c. 40.), in which the analogy of the ministerial offices of the Church with the priestly functions of the Jewish temple is distinctly developed, is rejected as an interpolation by all judicious and impartial scholars.

(2) See his 68th Epistle, in which he draws the analogy between the legitimate bishop and the sacerdos of the law, the irregularly elected

and Corah, Dathan, and Abiram :—*Neque enim aliunde hæreses abortiuntur, aut nata sunt schismata, quam inde quod sacerdoti Dei non obtemperatur, nec unus in ecclesiâ ad tempus sacerdos, et ad tempus Juxta, vice Christi cogitatus : cui si secundum magisteria divina obtemperaret fraternitas universa, neino adversum sacerdotium collegium quicquam moverat. Ad Cornel., Epist. Iv.*

Change in  
the mode  
of elec-  
tion.

was to worship God, and to fulfil their Christian duties in uninterrupted obscurity. But as the episcopate became an object of ambition or interest, the disturbing forces which operate on the justice and wisdom of popular elections could not but be called forth; and slowly the clergy, by example, by influence, by recommendation, by dictation, by usurpation, identified their acknowledged right of consecration for a particular office with that of appointment to it. This was one of their last triumphs. In the days of Cyprian, and towards the close of the third century, the people had the right of electing, or at least of rejecting, candidates for the priesthood (1). In the latter half of the fourth century, the streets of Rome ran with blood in the contest of Damasus and Ursicinus, for the bishopric of Rome; both factions arrayed against each other the priests and the people who were their respective partisans (2). Thus the clergy had become a distinct and recognised class in society, consecrated by a solemn ceremony, the imposition of hands, which, however, does not yet seem to have been indelible (3). But each church was still a separate and independent community; the bishop as its sovereign, the presbyters, and sometimes the deacons, as a kind of religious senate, conducted all its internal concerns. Great deference was paid from the first to the bishops of the more important sees: the number and wealth of the congregations would give them weight and dignity; and in general those prelates would be men of the highest character and attainments; yet promotion to a wealthier or more distinguished see was looked upon as betraying worldly ambition. The enemies of Eusebius, the Arian, or semi-Arian, bishop of Constantinople, bitterly taunted him with his elevation from the less important see of Nicomedia to the episcopate of the Eastern metropolis. This translation was prohibited by some councils (4).

Metropoli-  
tan bi-  
shops.

The level of ecclesiastical or episcopal dignity gradually broke up; some bishops emerged into a higher rank; the single community over which the bishop originally presided grew into the aggregation of several communities, and formed a diocese; the metropolitan rose above the ordinary bishop, the patriarch assumed a rank above the metropolitan, till at length, in the regularly graduated scale, the primacy of Rome was asserted, and submitted to by the humble and obsequious West.

(1) *Plebs ipsa maximè habeat potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi.* Epist. lxvii. Cornelius was testimonio cleri, ac suffragio populi electus. Compare Apostol. Constit. viii. 4. The Council of Laodicea (at the beginning of the fourth century) ordains that bishops are to be appointed by the metropolitans, and that the multitude, οἱ ὄχλοι, are not to designate persons for the priesthood.

(2) Ammianus Marcell. xxvii. 3. Hieron. in Chron. Compare Gibbon, vol. iv. 259.

(3) A canon of the Council of Chalcedon (can.

7.) prohibits the return of a spiritual person to the laity, and his assumption of lay offices in the state. See also Conc. Turon. i. c. 5. The laws of Justinian confiscate to the Church the property of any priest who has forsaken his orders. Cod. Just. i. tit. iii. 53.; Nov. v. 4. 125. c. 15. This seems to imply that the practice was not uncommon even at that late period. Compare Planck, vol. i. 399.

(4) Synod. Nic. can. 15.; Conc. Sard. c. 2.; Conc. Arel. 21.



The diocese grew up in two ways,—1. In the larger cities, the rapid increase of the Christians led necessarily to the formation of separate congregations, which, to a certain extent, required each its proper organisation, yet invariably remained subordinate to the single bishop. In Rome, towards the beginning of the fourth century, there were above forty churches, rendering allegiance to the prelate of the metropolis.

Formation  
of the  
diocese.

2. Christianity was first established in the towns and cities, and from each centre diffused itself with more or less success into the adjacent country. In some of these country congregations, bishops appear to have been established, yet these chorepiscopi, or rural bishops, maintained some subordination to the head of the mother church (1); or where the converts were fewer, the rural Christians remained members of the mother church in the city (2). In Africa, from the immense number of bishops, each community seems to have had its own superior; but this was peculiar to the province. In general, the churches adjacent to the towns or cities, either originally were, or became, the diocese of the city bishop: for as soon as Christianity became the religion of the state, the powers of the rural bishops were restricted, and the office at length was either abolished or fell into disuse (3).

Chorepiscopi.

The rank of the metropolitan bishop, who presided over a certain number of inferior bishops, and the convocation of ecclesiastical or episcopal synods, grew up apparently at the same time and from the same causes. The earliest authentic synods seem to have arisen out of the disputes about the time of observing Easter (4); but before the middle of the third century, these occasional and extraordinary meetings of the clergy in certain districts took the form of provincial synods. These began in the Grecian provinces (5), but extended throughout the Christian world. In some cases they seem to have been assemblies of bishops alone, in others of the whole clergy. They met once or twice in the year; they were summoned by the metropolitan bishop, who presided in the meeting, and derived from, or confirmed his metropolitan dignity, by this presidency (6).

As the metropolitans rose above the bishops, so the archbishops or patriarchs rose above the metropolitans. These ecclesiastical dignities seem to have been formed according to the civil divisions of the empire (7). The patriarchs of Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexan-

Archbishops and patriarchs.

(1) See in Bingham, Ant. b. ii. c. 14, the controversy about the chorepiscopi or rural bishops.

(2) Justin Martyr speaks of the country converts. *παντῶν κατὰ πόλεις ἢ ἀγροῦς μετόντων, ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται.* Apolog. i. 67.

(3) Concil. Antioch. can. 10.; Concil. Ancyran. c. 13.; Conc. Laod. c. 57.

(4) See the list of earlier synods chiefly on this subject. Labbe, Concilia, vol. i. p. 595. 650., edit. Paris, 1671.

(5) See the remarkable passage in Tertullian, de Jejunio, with the ingenious commentary of Mosheim, De Reb. Christ. ante Const. M. pp. 264. 268.

(6) Necessariò apud nos fit, ut per singulos annos seniores et prappositi in unum conveniamus, ad disponenda ea, quæ curæ nostræ commissæ sunt. Firm. ad Cyprian. Ep. 75.

(7) Bingham names thirteen or fourteen patriarchs. Alexandria, Antioch, Cæsarea, Jerusalem, Ephesus, Constantinople, Thessalonica, Sirmium, Rome, Carthage, Milan, Lyons, To-

dria, Rome, and by a formal decree of the Council of Chalcedon, Constantinople, assumed even a higher dignity. They asserted the right, in some cases, of appointing, in others of deposing, even metropolitan bishops (1).

While Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople contested the supremacy of the East, the two former as more ancient and Apostolic churches, the latter as the imperial city, Rome stood alone, as in every respect the most eminent church in the West. While other churches might boast their foundation by a single apostle (and those churches were always held in peculiar respect), Rome asserted that she had been founded by, and preserved the ashes of two, and those the most distinguished of the Apostolic body. Before the end of the third century, the lineal descent of her bishops from St. Peter was unhesitatingly claimed, and obsequiously admitted by the Christian world (2). The name of Rome was still imposing and majestic, particularly in the West; the wealth of the Roman bishop probably far surpassed that of other prelates, for Rome was still the place of general concourse and resort; and the pious strangers who visited the capital would not withhold their oblations to the metropolitan church. Within the city, he presided over above forty churches, besides the suburbicarian districts. The whole clerical establishment at Rome amounted to forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolyths, fifty-two exorcists, readers, and door-keepers. It comprehended fifteen hundred widows and poor brethren, with a countless multitude of the higher orders and of the people. No wonder that the name, the importance, the wealth, the accredited Apostolic foundation of Rome, arrayed her in pre-eminent dignity. Still, in his correspondence with the Bishop of Rome, the general tone of Cyprian, the great advocate of Christian unity, is that of an equal; though he shows great respect to the Church of Rome, it is to the faithful guardian of an uninterrupted tradition, not as invested with superior authority (3).

As the hierarchical pyramid tended to a point, its base spread

Iedo, York. But their respective claims do not appear to have been equally recognised, or at the same period.

(1) Chrysostom deposed Gerontius, metropolitan of Nicomedia. Sozomen, viii. 6.

(2) The passage of Irenæus (lib. ii. c. 3), as is well known, is the first distinct assertion of any primacy in Peter, and derived from him to the see of Rome. This passage would be better authority if it existed in the original language, not in an indifferent translation; if it were the language of an Eastern, not a Western, prelate, who might acknowledge a supremacy in Rome, which would not have been admitted by the older Asiatic sees; still more, if it did not assert what is manifestly untrue, the *foundation* of the Church of Rome by St. Peter and St. Paul (see vol. ii. p. 44.); and, finally, if Irenæus could be conclusive authority on such a subject. Planck justly observes, that the *potior principalitas* of

the city of Rome was the primary reason why a *potior principalitas* was recognised in the see of Rome.

(3) While I deliver my own conclusions, without fear or compromise, I would avoid all controversy on this as well as on other subjects. It is but right, therefore, for me to give the two apparently conflicting passages in Cyprian on the primacy of St. Peter: — *Nam nec Petrus quem primum Dominus elegit, et super quem ædificavit Ecclesiam suam \* \* vindicavit sibi aliquid insolenter aut arroganter assumpsit, ut diceret se primum tenere, et obtemperari à novellis et posteris sibi potius oportere.* Epist. lxxi. *Hoc erant utique ceteri Apostoli, quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis; sed exordium ab unitate proficiscitur, et primatus Petro datur, ut una Christi ecclesia, et cathedra una monstretur.* De Unit. Eccles.

Rome.

out into greater width. The greater pomp of the services, the more intricate administration of affairs, the greater variety of regulations required by the increasing and now strictly separated classes of votaries imposed the necessity for new functionaries, besides the bishops, priests, and deacons. These were the archdeacon and the five subordinate officiating ministers, who received a kind of ordination. 1. The sub-deacon, who, in the eastern church, collected the alms of the laity and laid them upon the altar; and, in the Western, acted as a messenger, or bearer of despatches. 2. The reader, who had the custody of the sacred books, and as the name implies, read them during the service. 3. The acolyth, who was an attendant on the bishop, carried the lamp before him, or bore the eucharist to the sick. 4. The exorcist, who read the solemn forms over those possessed by dæmons, the energoumenoi, and sometimes at baptism. 5. The ostiarius or door-keeper, who assigned his proper place in the church to each member, and guarded against the intrusion of improper persons.

New scattered offices.

As Christianity assumed a more manifest civil existence, the closer correspondence, the more intimate sympathy between its remote and scattered members, became indispensable to its strength and consistency. Its uniformity of development in all parts of the world arose out of, and tended to promote, this unity. It led to that concentration of the governing power in a few, which terminated at length in the West in the unrestricted power of one.

The internal unity of the church, or universally disseminated body of Christians, had been maintained by the general similarity of doctrine, of sentiment, of its first simple usages and institutions, and the common dangers which it had endured in all parts of the world. It possessed its consociating principles in the occasional correspondence between its remote members, in those recommendatory letters with which the Christian who travelled was furnished to his brethren in other parts of the empire; above all, in the common literature, which, including the sacred writings, seems to have spread with more or less regularity through the various communities. Nothing however tended so much, although they might appear to exacerbate and perpetuate diversities of opinion, to the maintenance of this unity, as the assemblage and recognition of general Councils as the representatives of universal Christendom (1).

Unity of the Church.

General Councils.

(1) The earliest councils (not œcumenic) were those of Rome (1st and 2d) and the seven held at Carthage, concerning the lapsi, the schism of Novatianus, and the rebaptizing of heretics. The seventh in Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ* (Labbe, *Concilia III.*), is the first of which we have any thing like a report; and from this time, either from the canons which they issue, or the opinions delivered by the bishops, the councils prove important authorities, not merely for the decrees of the Church, but for the dominant tone of sentiment, and even of manners. Abhorrence of

heresy is the prevailing feeling in this council, which decided the validity of heretical baptism. "Christ," says one bishop, "founded the Church, the Devil heresy. How can the synagogue of Satan administer the baptism of the Church?" Another subjoins, "He who yields or betrays the baptism of the Church to heretics, what is he but a Judas of the spouse of Christ." The Synod or Council of Antioch (A. D. 269) condemned Paul of Samosata. The Council of Illiberis (Elvira, or Granada), A. D. 303, affords some curious notices of the state of Christianity in that



The bold impersonation, the Church, seemed now to assume a more imposing visible existence. Its vital principle was no longer that unseen and hidden harmony which had united the Christians in all parts of the world with their Saviour and with each other. By the assistance of the orthodox Emperors, and the commanding abilities of its great defenders, one dominant form of doctrine had obtained the ascendancy; Gnosticism, Donatism, Arianism, Manicheism, had been thrown aside; and the Church stood, as it were, individualised, or idealised, by the side of the other social impersonation, the State. The Emperor was the sole ruler of the latter, and at this period the aristocracy of the superior clergy, at a later the autocracy of the Pope, at least as the representative of the Western Church, became the supreme authority of the former. The hierarchical power, from exemplary, persuasive, amiable, had become authoritative, commanding, awful. When Christianity became the most powerful religion of the many, of the Emperor, of the State, the convert, or the hereditary Christian had no strong Pagan party to receive him back into its bosom when outcast from the Church. If he ceased to believe, he no longer dared cease to obey. No course remained but prostrate submission, or the endurance of any penitential duty which might be enforced upon him; and on the penitential system, and the power of excommunication, to which we shall revert, rested the unshaken hierarchical authority over the human soul.

Increase  
in pomp.

With their power increased both those other sources of influence, pomp and wealth. Distinctions in station and in authority naturally lead to distinctions in manners, and those adventitious circumstances of dress, carriage, and habits, which designate different ranks. Confederating upon equal terms, the superior authorities in the church and state began to assume an equal rank. In the Christian city, the bishop became a personage of the highest importance; and the clergy, as a kind of subordinate religious magistracy, claimed, if a different kind, yet an equal share of reverence, with the civil authority; where the civil magistrate had his insignia

remote province. Some of the Heathen flamines appear to have attempted to reconcile the performances of some of their religious duties, at least their presiding at the games, with Christianity. There are many moral regulations which do not give a high idea of Spanish virtue. The bishops and clergy were not to be itinerant traders; they might trade within the province (can. xviii.), but were on no account to take upon usury. The Jews were probably settled in great numbers in Spain: the taking food with them is interdicted, as also to permit them to reap the harvest. Gambling is forbidden. The councils of Rome and of Arles were held to settle the Donatists controversy; but of the latter there are twenty-two canons chiefly of ecclesiastical regulations. The Council of Ancyra principally relates to the conduct of persons during

the time of persecution. The Council of Laodicea has some curious general canons. The first œcumenic council was that of Nice. See book iii. c. iv. It was followed by the long succession of Arian, and anti-Arian councils, at Tyre, Antioch, Rome, Milan, Sardica, Rimini, etc. The Arian Council of Antioch is very strict in its regulations for the residence of the bishops and the clergy, and their restriction of their labours to their own dioceses or cures (A. D. 341). Apud Labbe, vol. ii. 559. The first of Constantinople was the second œcumenic council (A. D. 381). It re-established Trinitarianism as the doctrine of the East; it elevated the bishopric of Constantinople into a patriarchate, to rank after Rome. The two other of the œcumenic councils are beyond the bounds of the present history.

of office, the natural respect of the people, and the desire of maintaining his official dignity, would invest the religious functionary likewise with some peculiar symbol of his character. With their increased rank and estimation, the clergy could not but assume a more imposing demeanour; and that majesty in which they were arrayed during the public ceremonial could not be entirely thrown off when they returned to ordinary life. The reverence of man exacts dignity from those who are its objects. The primitive Apostolic meanness of appearance and habit was altogether unsuited to their altered position, as equal in rank, more than equal in real influence and public veneration, to the civil officers of the empire or municipality. The consciousness of power will affect the best disciplined minds, and the unavoidable knowledge that salutary authority is maintained over a large mass of mankind by imposing manners, dress, and mode of living, would reconcile many to that which otherwise might appear incongruous to their sacred character. There was in fact, and always has been, among the more pious clergy, a perpetual conflict between a conscientious sense of the importance of external dignity and a desire, as conscientious, of retaining something of outward humility. The monkish and ascetic waged implacable war against that secular distinction which, if in some cases eagerly assumed by pride and ambition, was forced upon others by the deference, the admiration, the trembling subservience of mankind. The prelate who looked the most imperious, and spoke most sternly, on his throne, fasted and underwent the most humiliating privations in his chamber or his cell. Some prelates supposed, that as ambassadors of the Most High, as supreme governors in that which was of greater dignity than the secular empire, the earthly kingdom of Christ, they ought to array themselves in something of imposing dignity. The bishops of Rome early affected state and magnificence, Chrysostom, on the other hand, in Constantinople, differing from his predecessors, considered poverty of dress, humility of demeanour, and the most severe austerity of life, as more becoming a Christian prelate, who was to set the example of the virtues which he inculcated, and to show contempt for those worldly distinctions which properly belonged to the civil power. Others, among whom was Ambrose of Milan, while in their own persons and in private they were the plainest, simplest, and most austere of men, nevertheless threw into the service of the Church all that was solemn and magnificent; and as officiating functionaries, put on for the time the majesty of manner, the state of attendance, the splendour of attire, which seemed to be authorised by the gorgeousness of dress and ceremonial pomp in the Old Testament (1).

(1) The clergy were long without any distinction of dress, except on ceremonial occasions. At the end of the fourth century, it was the custom for them in some churches to wear black.

With the greater reverence, indeed, peculiar sanctity was exacted, and no doubt, in general, observed by the clergy. They were imperatively required to surpass the general body of Christians in purity of morals, and, perhaps even more, in all religious performances. As the outward ceremonial, fasting, public prayer during almost every part of the day, and rest of the ritual service, were more completely incorporated with Christianity, they were expected to maintain the public devotion by their example, and to encourage self-denial by their more rigid austerity.

Wealth  
of the  
clergy.

Wealth as well as pomp followed in the train of power. The desire to command wealth (we must not yet use the ignoble term covetousness) not merely stole imperceptibly into intimate connection with religion, but appeared almost a part of religion itself. The individual was content to be disinterested in his own person; the interest which he felt in the opulence of the Church, or even of his own order, appeared not merely excusable, but a sacred duty. In the hands of the Christian clergy, wealth, which appeared at that period to be lavished on the basest of mankind, and squandered on the most criminal and ignominious objects, might seem to be hallowed to the noblest purposes. It enabled Christianity to vie with Paganism in erecting splendid edifices for the worship of God, to provide an imposing ceremonial, lamps for midnight service, silver or golden vessels for the altar, veils, hangings, and priestly dresses; it provided for the wants of the poor, whom misgovernment, war, and taxation, independent of the ordinary calamities of human life, were grinding to the earth. To each church were attached numbers of widows and other destitute persons; the redemption of slaves was an object on which the riches of the Church were freely lavished: the sick in the hospitals and prisons, and destitute strangers were under their especial care. "How many captives has the wealth of the Pagan establishment released from bondage?" This is among the triumphant questions of the advocates of Christianity (1). The maintenance of children exposed by their parents, and taken up and educated by the Christians, was another source of generous expenditure. When, then, at first the munificence of the Emperor, and afterwards the gratitude and superstitious fears of the people, heaped up their costly offerings at

Uses to  
which it  
was ap-  
plied.

Socr. H. E. vi. 22. Jerome, however, recommends that they should neither be distinguished by too bright or too sombre colours. *Ad Nepot.* The proper habits were probably introduced at the end of the fifth century, as they are recognised by councils in the sixth. *Conc. Matic.* A. D. 581, can. 1. 5; *Trull.* c. 27. The tonsure began in the fourth century. *Prima del iv. secolo i semplici preti non avevano alcun abito distinto dagli altri o Pagani o Cristiani, se non in quanto la professata loro unità faceva una certa pompa de abjezione e de povertà.* Cicognara, *Storia de Scultura*, t. i. p. 27. Count Cicognara gives a

curious account of the date and origin of the different parts of the clerical dress. The mitre is of the eighth century, the tiara of the tenth.

The fourth Council of Carthage (A. D. 398) has some restrictions on dress. The clericus was not to wear long hair or beard (*nec comam habeat nec barbam*. Can. xlv.); he was to approve his profession by his dress and walk, and not to study the beauty of his dress or sandals. He might obtain his sustenance by working as an artisan, or in agriculture, provided he did not neglect his duty. Can. li. lii.

(1) Ambros. contra Symmachum.



the feet of the clergy, it would have appeared not merely ingratitude and folly, but impiety and uncharitableness to their brethren, to have rejected them. The clergy, as soon as they were set apart from the ordinary business of life, were maintained by the voluntary offerings of their brethren. The piety which embraced Christianity never failed in liberality. The payments seem chiefly to have been made in kind, rather than in money, though on extraordinary occasions large sums were raised for some sacred or charitable object. One of the earliest acts of Constantine was to make munificent grants to the despoiled and destitute Church (1). A certain portion of the public stores of corn and other produce, which was received in kind by the officers of the revenue, was assigned to the Church and clergy (2). This was withdrawn by Julian, and when regranted by the Christian Emperors, was diminished one third.

The law of Constantine which empowered the clergy of the Church to receive testamentary bequests, and to hold land, was a gift which would scarcely have been exceeded if he had granted them two provinces of the empire (3). It became almost a sin to die without some bequest to pious uses; and before a century had elapsed, the mass of property which had passed over to the Church was so enormous, that the most pious of the Emperors were obliged to issue a restrictive law, which the most ardent of the Fathers were constrained to approve. Jerome acknowledges, with the bitterness of shame, the necessity of this check on ecclesiastical avarice (4). "I complain not of the law, but that we have deserved such a law." The ascetic father and the Pagan historian describe the pomp and avarice of the Roman clergy in the fourth century. Ammianus, while he describes the sanguinary feud which took place for the prelacy between Damasus and Ursicinus, intimates that the magnificence of the prize may account for the obstinacy and ferocity with which it was contested. He dwells on the prodigal offerings of the Roman matrons to their bishop; his pomp, when in elaborate and elegant attire he was borne in his chariot through the admiring streets; the costly luxury of his almost imperial banquets. But the just historian contrasts this pride and luxury of the Roman pontiff with the more temperate life and dignified humility of the provincial bishops. Jerome goes on sternly to charge the whole Roman clergy with the old vice of the Heathen aristocracy, hæredipety or legacy hunting, and asserts

Law of  
Constantine em-  
powering  
the  
Church to  
receive be-  
quests.

Restrictive edict  
of Valentinian.

Pope Damasus.

(1) Euseb. H. E. x. 6.

(2) Sozomen, H. E. v. 5.

(3) This is the observation of Planck.

(4) Valentinian II. de Episc. Solis clericis et monachis hac lege prohibetur, et prohibetur non à persecutoribus sed à principibus Christianis; nec de lege conqueror, sed doleo cur inuenerimus hanc legem. Hieronym. ad Nepot. He speaks also of the provida severaque legis cautio, et

tamen non sic refrænatur avaritia. Ambrose (l. ii. adv. Symm.) admits the necessity of the law. Augustine, while he loftily disclaims all participation in such abuses, acknowledges their frequency. Quicumque vult, ex hæredato filio hæredem facere ecclesiam, quærat alterum qui suscipiat, non Augustinum, immo. Deo propitio, inveniat neminem. Serm. 49.

that they used the holy and venerable name of the Church to extort for their own personal emolument, the wealth of timid or expiring devotees. The law of Valentinian justly withheld from the clergy and the monks alone that privilege of receiving bequests which was permitted to the "lowest of mankind, Heathen priests, actors, charioteers and harlots."

Large parts of the ecclesiastical revenues, however, arose from more honourable sources. Some of the estates of the Heathen temples, though in general confiscated to the imperial treasury, were alienated to the Christian churches. The Church of Alexandria obtained the revenue of the Temple of Serapis (1).

These various estates and properties belonged to the Church in its corporate capacity, not to the clergy. They were charged with the maintenance of the fabric of the church, and the various charitable purposes, including the sustenance of their own dependent poor. Strong enactments were made to prevent their alienation from those hallowed purposes (2), the clergy were even restrained from bequeathing by will what they had obtained from the property of the Church. The estates of the Church were liable to the ordinary taxes, the land and capitation tax, but exempt from what were called sordid and extraordinary charges, and from the quartering of troops (3).

The bishops gradually obtained almost the exclusive management of this property. In some churches, a steward (*œconomus*) presided over this department, but he would, in general, be virtually under the control of the bishop. In most churches, the triple division began to be observed; one third of the revenue to the bishop, one to the clergy, the other to the fabric and the poor; the Church of Rome added a fourth, a separate portion for the fabric (4).

The clergy had become a separate community; they had their own laws of internal government, their own special regulations, or recognised proprieties of life and conduct. Their social delinquencies were not as yet withdrawn from the civil jurisdiction; but besides this, they were amenable to the severe judgments of ecclesiastical censure (5); the lowest were liable to corporeal chastise-

(1) Sozomen, v. 7. The Church of Antioch possessed lands, houses, rents, carriages, mules, and other kinds of property. It undertook the daily sustenance of 3000 widows and virgins, besides prisoners, the sick in the hospitals, the maimed, and the diseased, who sat down, as it were before the Christian altar, and received food and raiment, besides many other accidental claims on their benevolence. Chrysostom, *Oper. Montfaucon* in his dissertation, gives the references.

(2) Conc. Carth. iii. 40.; Antioch, 24. Constit. Apost. 40. Cod. Theodos. de Episc. et Clericis, i. 33.

(3) Planck, P. iii. c. vi. 3.

(4) By a law of Theodosius and Valens, A. D. 434, the property of any bishop, presbyter, deacon, deaconess, sub-deacon, etc., or of any monk, who died intestate, and without legal heirs, fell, not to the treasury, as in ordinary cases, but to the church or monastery to which he belonged. The same privilege was granted to the Corporation of Decurions. Codex Theodos. v. iii. 1.

(5) Sozomen states that Constantine gave his clergy the privilege of rejecting the jurisdiction of the civil tribunal, and bringing their causes to the bishop. P. M. i. 9. But these were probably disputes between clergyman and clergyman. All others were cases of arbitration, by mutual agree-

ment. Flagellation, which was administered in the synagogue, and was so common in Roman society, was by no means so disgraceful as to exempt the persons at least of the inferior clergy from its infliction. But the more serious punishment was degradation into the vulgar class of worshippers. To them it was the most fearful condemnation to be ejected from the inner sanctuary and thrust down from their elevated station (1).

As yet they were not entirely estranged from society, they had not become a caste by the legal enforcement or general practice of celibacy. Clement, of Alexandria asserts and vindicates the marriage of some of the Apostles (2). The discreet remonstrance of the old Egyptian bishop perhaps prevented the Council of Nice from imposing that heavy burden on the reluctant clergy. The aged Paphnutius, himself unmarried, boldly asserted that the conjugal union was chastity (3). But that, which, in the third century is asserted to be free to all mankind, clergy as well as laity, in Egypt (4), in the fourth, according to Jerome, was prohibited or limited by vows of continence. It has been asserted (5), and without refutation, that there was no ecclesiastical law or regulation which compelled the celibacy of the clergy for the first three centuries. Clement of Alexandria, as we see, argues against enforced celibacy from the example of the Apostles. Married bishops and presbyters frequently occur in the history of Eusebius. The martyrdom of Numidicus was shared and not dishonoured by the companionship of his wife (6). It was a sight of joy and consolation to the husband to see her perishing in the same flames. The wives of the clergy are recognised, not merely in older writings, but also in the public documents of the Church (7). Council after council, in the East, introduced regulations, which, though intended to restrict, recognise the legality of these ties (8). Highly as they exalt the an-

Celibacy  
of the  
clergy.

ment; but the civil power was to ratify their decree. In a Novella of Valentinian, A. D. 752, it is expressly said,—*Quoniam constat episcopos et presbyteros forum legibus non habere* \*\* nec de aliis causis præter religionem posse cognoscere, Compare Planck, p. 300. The clericus was bound to appear, if summoned by a layman, before the ordinary judge. Justinian made the change, and that only in a limited manner.

(1) The decrees of the fourth council of Carthage show the strict morals and humble subordination demanded of the clergy at the close of the fourth century.

(2) \**Ἡ καὶ τοὺς Ἀποστόλους ἀποδοκιμάζουσι; Πέτρος μὲν γὰρ καὶ Φίλιππος ἐπαῖδοιτοῦσαντο. Φίλιππος δὲ καὶ τὰς θυγατέρας ἀνδράσιν ἐξέδωκεν, καὶ ὁ γε Παῦλος οὐκ ὀκνεῖ ἐν τινὶ ἐπιστολῇ τὴν αὐτὸν προσαγορεύειν σύζυγον, ἣν οὐ περιέκομιζεν διὰ τὸ τῆς ὑπηρεσίας εὐσταλέος.*—Strom. l. iii. c. 6. On the question of the marriage of the apostles and their immediate followers, almost every thing is collected

in a note of Cotelierius, *Patres Apostolici*, ii. 241.

(3) Gelasii. *Histor. Conc. Nic.* c. xxxii. Socrat. 1. 11. Sozomen, i. 23. Baronius insists upon this being Greek fable.

(4) *Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὸν τῆς μίας γυναικος ἄνδρα πάνυ ἀποδέχεται καὶν πρεσβύτερος ἢ, καὶν διάκονος, καὶν λαϊκός, ἀνεπιλήπτως γάμῳ χρώμενος. Σωθίσεται δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας.* Strom. iii. 12. 9.

(5) By Bingham, book iv.

(6) Numidicus presbyter uxorem adhaerentem lateri suo, concrematam cum cæteris, vel conservatam potius dixerim, letus aspexit. Cyprian, p. 525. See in Basnage, *Dissertatio Septima*, a list of married prelates.

(7) Conc. Gang. c. 4. Conc. Ancy. c. 10. This law allows any deacon to marry.

(8) In the West, the Council of Elvira commands the clergy to abstain from connubial intercourse and the procreation of children. Can. xxxiii. This was frequently re-enacted. Among others, Conc. Carthag. v. 2. Labbe, ii. 1216.



gelic state of celibacy, neither Basil in the East, nor Augustine in the West, positively prohibits the marriage of the clergy (1).

But in the fourth century, particularly in the latter half, the concurrent influence of the higher honours attributed to virginity by all the great Christian writers; of the hierarchical spirit, which, even at that time, saw how much of its corporate strength depended on this entire detachment from worldly ties; of the monastic system, which worked into the clerical, partly by the frequent selection of monks for ordination, and for consecration to ecclesiastical dignities, partly by the emulation of the clergy, who could not safely allow themselves to be outdone in austerity by these rivals for popular estimation; all these various influences introduced various restrictions and regulations on the marriage of the clergy, which darkened at length into the solemn ecclesiastical interdict. First, the general sentiment repudiated a second marriage as a monstrous act of incontinence, an infirmity or a sin which ought to prevent the Christian from ever aspiring to any ecclesiastical office (2). The next offence against the general feeling was marriage with a widow; then followed the restriction of marriage after entering into holy orders; the married priest retained his wife, but to condescend to such carnal ties after ordination, was revolting to the general sentiment, and was considered to imply a total want of feeling for the dignity of their high calling. Then was generally introduced a demand of abstinence from sexual connection from those who retained their wives: this was imperatively required from the higher orders of the clergy. It was considered to render unclean, and to disqualify even from prayer for the people, as the priest's life was to be a perpetual prayer (3). Not that there was as yet any uniform practice. The bishops assembled at the Council of Gangra (4) condemned the followers of Eustathius, who refused to receive the sacraments from any but unmarried priests. The heresy of Jovinian, on the other hand, probably called forth the severe regulations of Pope Siricius (5). This sort of encyclical letter positively prohibited

(1) Basil speaks of a presbyter who had contumaciously contracted an unlawful marriage. Can. ii. c. 27. On Augustine, compare Theiner, p. 154.

(2) Athenagoras laid down the general principle, ὁ γὰρ δεύτερος (γάμος) εὐπρεπὴς ἐστὶ μοιχεία. De Resurr. Carn. Compare Orig. contr. Cels. vii., and Hom. vi., in Num. xviii., in Luc. cxviii., in Matt. Tertull. ad Uxor. 1-5. This was almost an universal moral axiom. Epiphanius said, that since the coming of Christ no digamous clergyman had ever been ordained. Barbeyrac has collected the passages of the Fathers expressive of their abhorrence of second marriages. Morale des Pères, p. 1. 29. 34. 37. etc. The Council of Neo-Cæsarea forbade clergymen to be present at a second marriage—*πρεσβύτερον εἰς γάμους διαγαμούντων μὴ ἐστιᾶσθαι*. Can. vii.

(3) Such is the distinct language of Jerome. Si laicus et quicumque fidelis orare non potest nisi carent officio conjugali, sacerdoti, cui semper pro populo offerenda sunt sacrificia semper orandum est. Si semper orandum est, semper carendum matrimonio. Adv. Jovin. p. 175.

(4) The Council of Gangra, in the preamble and in the first canon do not appear to refer necessarily to the wives of the clergy. They anathematise certain teachers (the Eustathians) who had blamed marriage, and said that a faithful and pious woman who slept with her husband could not enter into the kingdom of heaven. A sacred virgin is prohibited from vaunting over a married woman, canon x. Women are forbidden to abandon their husbands and children.

(5) The letter of Siricius in Mansi Council. iii. 635., A.D. 385.

all clergy of the higher orders from any intercourse with their wives. A man who lived to the age of thirty, the husband of one wife, that wife, when married, a virgin, might be an acolyth or subdeacon; after five years of strict continence, he might be promoted to a priest; after ten years more of the same severe ordeal, a bishop. A clerk, any one in holy orders, even of the lowest degree, who married a widow, or a second wife, was instantly deprived: no woman was to live in the house of a clerk.

The Council of Carthage, reciting the canon of a former council, commands the clergy to abstain from all connection with their wives. The enactment is perpetually repeated, and in one extended to subdeacons (1). The Council of Toledo prohibited the promotion of ecclesiastics who had children. The Council of Arles prohibited the ordination of a married priest (2), unless he made a promise of divorce from the married state. Jerome distinctly asserts that it was the universal regulation of the East, of Egypt, and of Rome (3) to ordain only those who were unmarried, or who ceased to be husbands. But even in the fourth, and the beginning of the fifth centuries, the practice rebelled against this severe theory. Married clergymen, even married bishops, and with children, occur in the ecclesiastical annals. Athanasius, in his letter to Dracontius, admits and allows the full right of the bishop to marriage (4). Gregory of Nazienzen was born after his father was bishop, and had a younger brother named Cæsarius (5). Gregory of Nyssa, and Hilary of Poitiers, were married. Less distinguished names frequently occur: those of Spyridon (6) and Eustathius (7). Synesius, whose character enabled him to accept episcopacy on his own terms, positively repudiated these unnatural restrictions on the freedom and holiness of the conjugal state. "God and the law, and the holy hand of Theophilus bestowed on me my wife. I declare, therefore, solemnly, and call you to witness, that I will not be plucked from her, nor lie with her in secret, like an adulterer. But I hope and pray that we may have many and virtuous children (8)."

Married  
bishops  
and  
clergy.

The Council of Trulla only demanded this high test of spirituality, absolute celibacy, from bishops, and left the inferior clergy to their freedom. But the earlier Western Council of Toledo only admitted the deacon, and that under restrictions, to connubial inter-

(1) These councils of Carthage are dated A. D. 390, 418, and 419.

(2) Assumi aliquem ad sacerdotium non posse in vinculo sacerdotii constitutum, nisi primum fuerit promissa conversio. A. D. 452.

(3) Quid facient Orientis Ecclesiæ? quid Ægypti, et sedis Apostolicæ, quæ aut virgines clericos accipiunt aut continentes; aut si uxores habuerint, mariti esse desistant. Adv. Vigilantium, p. 281. Jerome appeals to Justinian himself:—"Certè confiteris non posse esse episcopum qui in episcopatu filios faciat, alioqui si deprehensus fuerit, non quasi vir tenebitur, sed

quasi adulter damnabitur. Adv. Jovin. 175. Compare Epiphanius, Hæres. liv. 4.

(4) Athanasii Epistola ad Dracontium.

(5) Gregory makes his father thus address him:—

Οὐπὼ τοσοῦτον ἐκμετέτρηκας ἔτιον  
"Ὅσος διήλθε θυσίαν ἐμοὶ χρόνος.

De Vitâ Suâ, v. 512.

(6) Sozom. i. 11. Socrat. i. 12.

(7) Socrat. ii. 43.

(8) Synesii Epist. 105.

course; the presbyter who had children after his ordination could not be a bishop (1).

Moral consequences.

This overstrained demand on the virtue, not of individuals in a high state of enthusiasm, but of a whole class of men; this strife with nature, in that which, in its irregular and lawless indulgence, is the source of so many evils and of so much misery, in its more moderate and legal form is the parent of the purest affections, and the holiest charities; this isolation from those social ties which, if at times they might withdraw them from total dedication to their sacred duties, in general, would, by their tending to soften and humanise, be the best school for the gentle and affectionate discharge of those duties—the enforcement of the celibacy of the clergy, though not yet by law, by dominant opinion, was not slow in producing its inevitable evils. Simultaneously with the sterner condemnation of marriage, or at least the exaggerated praises of chastity, we hear the solemn denunciations of the law, the deepening remonstrances of the more influential writers, against those secret evasions by which the clergy endeavoured to obtain the same without the practice of celibacy, to enjoy some of the pleasures and advantages without the crime of marriage. From the middle of the third century, in which the growing aversion to the marriage of the clergy begins to appear, we find the “sub-introduced” females constantly proscribed (2). The intimate union of the priest with a young, often a beautiful female, who still passed to the world under the name of a virgin, and was called by the priest by the unsuspected name of sister, seems from the strong and reiterated language of Jerome (3), Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, and others, to have been almost general. It was interdicted by an imperial law (4).

Molieres subintroductæ.

Thus, in every city, in almost every town and every village of the Roman empire, had established itself a new permanent magistracy,

(1) Conc. Tolet. A. D. 400, can. i.

(2) They are mentioned in the letter of the bishops of Antioch, against Paul of Samosata. The Council of Illiberis (incautiously) allowed a sister, or a virgin, dedicated to God, to reside with a bishop or presbyter, not a stranger.

(3) Unde sine nuptiis aliud nomen uxorem? Imo unde novum concubinarum genus? Plus inferam. Unde meretrices univiræ? Eadem domo, uno cubiculo, sæpe uno tenentur et lectulo. Et suspiciosos nos vocant, si aliquid existimamus. Frater sororem virginem deserit: calibem spernit virgo germanum: fratrem querit extraneum, et cum in eodem proposito esse se simulent quærant alienorum spiritale solatium, ut domi habeant carnale commercium. Hieronym. Epist. xxiii. ad Eustochium. If the vehemence of Jerome's language betrays his own ardent character, and his monkish hostility to the clergy, the general charge is amply borne out by other writers. Many quotations may be found in Gothofred's Note on the law of Honorius. Gregory of Nazianzen says, — Ἀρσενὰ παντ' ἀλέεινε συρρίσκατον τε μάλιστα. The language of

Cyprian, however, even in the third century, is the strongest:—Certè ipse concubitus, ipse amplexus, ipsa confabulatio, et inosculatio, et conjacentium duorum turpis et fæda dormitio quantum dedecoris et crininiis confitetur. Cyprian justly observes, that such intimacy would induce a jealous husband to take to his sword. Epist. lxii. ad Pomponium.

But the canon of the Council of Nice, which prohibits the usage, and forbids the priest to have a subintroducta mulier, unless a mother, sister, or aunt, the only relationships beyond suspicion; and the still stronger tone of the law, show the frequency, as well as the evil, of the practice. Unhappily they were blind to its real cause,

(4) Eum qui probabilem sæculo disciplinam agit decolorari consortio sororiae appellationis non decet. But this law of Honorius, A. D. 420, allowed the clergy to retain their wives, if they had been married before entering into orders. See the third and fourth canons of the Council of Carthage, A. D. 348.



in a certain sense independent of the government, with considerable inalienable endowments, and filled by men of a peculiar and sacred character, and recognised by the state. Their authority extended far beyond their jurisdiction; their influence far beyond their authority. The internal organisation was complete. The three great patriarchs in the East, throughout the West the Bishop of Rome, exercised a supreme and, in some points, an appellate jurisdiction. Great ecclesiastical causes could be removed to their tribunal. Under them, the metropolitans, and in the next rank the bishops, governed their dioceses, and ruled the subordinate clergy, who now began to form parishes, separate districts to which their labours were to be confined. In the superior clergy had gradually become vested, not the ordination only, but the appointment, of the inferior; they could not quit the diocese without letters from the bishop, or be received or exercise their functions in another without permission.

On the incorporation of the Church with the State, the co-ordinate civil and religious magistracy maintained each its separate powers. On one side, as far as the actual celebration of the ecclesiastical ceremonial, and in their own internal affairs in general; on the other, in the administration of the military, judicial, and fiscal affairs of the state, the bounds of their respective authority were clear and distinct. As a citizen and subject, the Christian, the priest, and the bishop, were amenable to the laws of the empire and to the imperial decrees, and liable to taxation, unless specially exempted, for the service of the state (1). The Christian statesman, on the other hand, of the highest rank, was amenable to the ecclesiastical censures, and was bound to submit to the canons of the Church in matters of faith and discipline, and was entirely dependent on their judgment for his admission or rejection from the privileges and hopes of the Christian.

So far the theory was distinct and perfect; each had his separate and exclusive sphere; yet there could not but appear a debateable ground on which the two authorities came into collision, and neither could altogether refrain from invading the territory of his ally or antagonist.

The treaty between the contracting parties was, in fact, formed with such haste and precipitancy, that the rights of neither party could be defined or secured; eager for immediate union, and impatient of delay, they framed no deed of settlement, by which, when their mutual interests should be less identified, and jealousy and

Union  
of Church  
and State.

(1) The law of Constantius which appears to withdraw the bishops entirely from the civil jurisdiction, and to give the privilege of being tried upon all charges by a tribunal of bishops, is justly considered by Gothofred as a local or temporary act, probably connected with the feuds concerning Arianism. Cod. Theod. xvi. 2.

12., with Gothofred's note, Valens admitted the ecclesiastical courts to settle religious difficulties and slight offences. xvi. 2. 23. The same is the scope of the more explicit law of Honorius. xvi. 2. 201. The immunity of the clergy from the civil courts was of very much later date.

estrangement should arise, they might assert their respective rights, and enforce their several duties.

In ecclesiastical affairs, strictly so called, the supremacy of the Christian magistracy, it has been said was admitted. They were the legislators of discipline, order, and doctrine. The festivals, the fasts, the usages and canons of the Church, the government of the clergy, were in their exclusive power; the decrees of particular synods and councils possessed undisputed authority, as far as their sphere extended; general councils were held binding on the whole Church. But it was far more easy to define that which did belong to the province of the Church than that which did not. Religion asserts its authority, and endeavours to extend its influence over the whole sphere of moral action, which is, in fact, over the whole of human life, its habits, manners, conduct. Christianity, as the most profound moral religion, exacted the most complete and universal obedience; and as the acknowledged teachers and guardians of Christianity, the clergy, continued to draw within their sphere every part of human life in which man is actuated by moral or religious motives, the moral authority, therefore, of the religion, and consequently of the clergy, might appear legitimately to extend over every transaction of life, from the legislature of the sovereign, which ought, in a Christian king, to be guided by Christian motives, to the domestic duties of the peasant, which ought to be fulfilled on the principle of Christian love.

But, on the other hand, the State was supreme over all its subjects, even over the clergy, in their character of citizens. The whole tenure of property, to what use soever dedicated (except in such cases as itself might legalise on its first principles, and guarantee, when bestowed, as by gift or bequest), was under its absolute control; the immunities which it conferred, it might revoke; and it would assert the equal authority of the constitutional laws over every one who enjoyed the protection of those laws. Thus, though in extreme cases, these separate bounds of jurisdiction were clear, the tribunals of ecclesiastical and civil law could not but, in process of time, interfere with and obstruct each other.

But there was another prolific source of difference. The clergy, in one sense, from being the representative body, had begun to consider themselves the Church; but in another and more legitimate sense, the State, when Christian, as comprehending all the Christians of the empire, became the Church. Which was the legislative body,—the whole community of Christians or the Christian aristocracy, who were in one sense the admitted rulers? And who was to appoint these rulers? It is quite clear that, from the first, though the consecration to the religious offices was in the bishop and clergy, the laity had a voice in the ratification, if not in the appointment. Did not the State fairly succeed to all the rights of

the laity, more particularly when privilege and endowments, attached to the ecclesiastical offices, were conferred or guaranteed by the state, and therefore might appear in justice revocable, or liable to be regulated by the civil power?

This vital question at this time was still farther embarrassed by the rash eagerness with which the dominant Church called upon the State to rid it of its internal adversaries. When once the civil power was recognised as cognisant of ecclesiastical offences, where was that power to end? The Emperor, who commanded his subjects to be of one religion, might command them, by the same title, to adopt another. The despotic head of the State might assert his despotism as head of the Church. It must be acknowledged that no theory, which has satisfactorily harmonised the relations of these two, at once, in one sense separate, in another identical, communities, has satisfied the reasoning and dispassionate mind; while the separation of the two communities, the total dissociation, as it were, of the Christian and the citizen, is an experiment apparently not likely to advance or perpetuate the influence of Christianity.

At all events, the hasty and unsettled compact of this period left room for constant jealousy and strife. As each was the stronger, it encroached upon, and extended its dominion into the territory of the other. In general, though with very various fortunes, in different parts of the world, and at different periods, the Church was in the ascendant, and for many centuries confronted the State, at least on equal terms.

The first aggression, as it were, which the Church made on the State, was in assuming the cognisance over all questions and causes relating to marriage. In sanctifying this solemn contract, it could scarcely be considered as transgressing its proper limits, as guardian of this primary element of social virtue and happiness. In the early Church, the benediction of the bishop or presbyter seems to have been previously sought by the Christian at the time of marriage. The Heathen rite of marriage was so manifestly religious, that the Christian, while he sought to avoid that idolatrous ceremony, would wish to substitute some more simple and congenial form. In the general sentiment that this contract should be public and sacred, he would seek the sanction of his own community, as its witnesses. Marriage not performed in the face of his Christian brethren was little better than an illicit union (1).

It was an object likewise of the early Christian community to

Marriage brought under ecclesiastical discipline.

(1) Ideo penes nos occultæ conjunctiones, id est, non prius apud ecclesiam professæ, juxta mœchiam et fornicationem judicari periclitantur. Tertull. de Pudic. c. 4.

Though the rite was solemnised in the presence of the Christian priest, and the Church attempted to impose a graver and more serious dignity, it was not so easy to throw off the gay and festive character which had prevailed in the

Heathen times. Paganism, or rather, perhaps, human nature, was too strong to subvert. The austere preacher of Constantinople reproved the loose hymns to Venus, which were heard even at Christian weddings. The bride, he says, was borne by drunken men to her husband's house, among choirs of dancing harlots, with pipes and flutes, and songs, full, to her chaste ear, of offensive licence.



restrict the marriage of Christians to Christians, to discountenance, if not prohibit, those with unbelievers (1). This was gradually extended to marriages with heretics, or members of another Christian sect. When, therefore, the Church began to recognise five legal impediments to marriage, this was the 1st,—difference of religion between Christians and infidels, Jews, or heretics. The 2nd was, the impediment of crime. Persons guilty of adultery were not allowed to marry according to the Roman law; this was recognised by the Church. A law of Constantius had made rape, or forcible abduction of a virgin, a capital offence; and, even with the consent of the injured female, marriage could not take place. III. Impediments from relationship. Here also they were content to follow the Roman law, which was as severe and precise as the Mosaic Institutes (2). IV. The civil impediment. Children adopted by the same father could not marry. A freeman could not marry a slave; the connection was only concubinage. It does not appear that the Church yet ventured to correct this vice of Roman society. V. Spiritual relationship, between godfathers and their spiritual children: this was afterwards carried much farther. To these regulations for the repression of improper connections, were added some other ecclesiastical impediments. There were holy periods in the year, in which it was forbidden to contract marriage. No one might marry while under ecclesiastical interdict; nor one who had made a vow of chastity.

#### Divorce.

The facility of divorce was the primary principle of corruption in Roman social life. Augustus had attempted to enforce some restrictions on this unlimited power of dissolving the matrimonial contract from caprice or the lightest motive. Probably, the severity of Christian morals had obtained that law of Constantine which was so much too rigid for the state of society, as to be entirely ineffective, from the impossibility of carrying it into execution (3). It was relaxed by Constantius, and almost abrogated by Honorius (4). The inveterate evil remained. A Christian writer, at the

(1) A law of Valentinian II., Theodosius and Arcadius (A. D. 388), prohibited the intermarriage of Jews and Christians. Codex Theodos. iii. 7. 2. It was to be considered adultery.—Cave, Christiane, Gentili aut Judæo filiam tradere; cave, inquam, Gentilem aut Judæam atque alienigenam, hoc est, hæreticam, et omnem alienam à fide tuâ uxorem accersas tibi. Ambros. de Abraham. c. 9. Cum certissimè noveris tradi à nobis Christianam nisi Christiano non posse. Augustin. Ep. 234. ad Rusticum.

The council of Illiberis had prohibited Christians from giving their daughters in marriage to Gentiles (propter copiam puellarum), also to Jews, heretics, and especially to Heathen priests. Can. xv. xvi. xvii.

(2) See the various laws in the Cod. Theod., lib. iii. tit. 12., De Incestis Nuptiis.

(3) Codex Theodos. iii. 16. 1. See p. 41.

(4) By the law of Honorius,—1. The woman who demanded a divorce without sufficient proof

forfeited her dowry, was condemned to banishment, could not contract a second marriage, was without hope of restoration to civil rights. 2. If she made out only a tolerable case (convicted her husband only of mediocris culpa), she only forfeited her dowry, and could not contract a second marriage, but was liable to be prosecuted by her husband for adultery. 3. If she made a strong case (gravis causa), she retained her dowry, and might marry again after five years. The husband, in the first case, forfeited the gifts and dowry, and was condemned to perpetual celibacy, not having liberty to marry again after a certain number of years. In the second, he forfeited the dowry but not the donation, and could marry again after two years. In the third, he was bound to prosecute his guilty wife. On conviction, he received the dowry, and might marry again immediately. Cod. Theodos. iii. xvi. 2.

beginning of the fifth century, complains that men changed their wives as quickly as their clothes, and that marriage chambers were set up as easily as booths in a market (1). At a later period than that to which our history extends, when Justinian attempted to prohibit all divorces except those on account of chastity, that is when the parties embraced the monastic life, he was obliged to relax the law on account of the fearful crimes, the plots and poisonings, and other evils, which it introduced into domestic life.

But though it could not correct or scarcely mitigate this evil by public law in the general body of society, Christianity, in its proper and more peculiar sphere, had invested marriage in a religious sanctity, which at least, to a limited extent, repressed this social evil. By degrees, separation from bed and board, even in the case of adultery, the only cause which could dissolve the tie, was substituted and enforced by the clergy, instead of legal divorce. Over all the ceremonial forms, and all expressions which related to marriage, the Church threw the utmost solemnity; it was said to resemble the mystic union of Christ and the Church; till at length marriage grew up into a sacrament, indissoluble until the final separation of death, except by the highest ecclesiastical authority (2). It is impossible to calculate the effect of this canonisation, as it were, of marriage, the only remedy which could be applied, first to the corrupt manners of Roman society, and afterwards to the consequences of the barbarian invasions, in which, notwithstanding the strong moral element in the Teutonic character, and the respect for women (which, no doubt, was one of the original principles of chivalry), yet the dominance of brute force, and the unlimited rights of conquest, could not but lead to the perpetual, lawless, and violent dissolution of the marriage tie (3).

The cognisance of wills, another department in which the Church assumed a power not strictly ecclesiastical, seems to have arisen partly from an accidental circumstance. It was the custom among the Heathen to deposit wills in the temples, as a place of security; the Christians followed their practice, and chose their churches as the depositaries of these important documents. They thus came under the custody of the clergy, who, from guardians, became in their courts, the judges of their authenticity or legality, and at length a general tribunal for all matters relating to testaments.

WILLS.

(1) *Mulieres à maritis tanquam vestes subinde mutari, et thalamos tam sæpe et facile strui quam nudinarum tabernas. Asterius Amasenus apud Combesis. Auct. t. i.*

The story has been often quoted from St. Jerome, of the man (of the lowest class) in Rome, who had had twenty wives (not divorced—he had buried them all); his wife had had twenty-two husbands. There was a great anxiety to know which would outlive the other. The man carried the day, and bore his wife to the grave in a kind of triumphal procession. Hieronym, Epist. xci. p. 745.

(2) The Eastern churches had a horror of second marriage; a presbyter was forbidden to be present at the wedding-feast of a digamist. Can. vii.

(3) It is curious to trace the rapid fall of Roman pride. Valentinian made the intermarriage of a Roman provincial with a barbarian a capital crime (A. D. 370). Codex Theodosius, iii. 14. 1. Under Theodosius Fravitta, the Goth, married a Roman woman with the consent of the Emperor. Eunap. Excerpt. Legat. In another century, the daughters of emperors were the willing or the enforced brides of barbarian kings.

Peniten-  
tial disci-  
pline.

Thus religion laid its sacred control on all the material incidents of human life, and around the ministers of religion gathered all the influence thus acquired over the sentiments of mankind. The font of baptism usually received the Christian infant, and the form of baptism was uttered by the priest or bishop; the marriage was unhallowed without the priestly benediction; and at the close of life, the minister of religion was at hand to absolve and to reassure the departing spirit; at the funeral, he ratified, as it were, the solemn promises of immortality. But the great, permanent, and perpetual source of sacerdotal authority was the penitential discipline of the Church, which was universally recognised as belonging exclusively to the jurisdiction of the clergy. Christianity had sufficient power, to a certain degree, to engross the mind and heart, but not to keep under perpetual restraint the unruly passions or the inquisitive mind. The best were most conscious of human infirmity, and jealous of their own slight aberrations from the catholic belief; the bad had not merely their own conscience, but public fame and the condemnatory voice of the community, to prostrate them before the visible arbiters of the All-seeing Power. Sin, from the most heinous delinquency, or the darkest heresy, to the most trivial fault or the slightest deviation from the established belief, could only be reconciled by the advice, the guidance, at length by the direct authority, of the priest. He judged of its magnitude, he prescribed the appointed penance. The hierarchy were supposed to be invested with the keys of heaven and of hell; they undoubtedly held those which unlock the human heart,—fear and hope. And when once the mind was profoundly affected by Christianity, when hope had failed to excite to more generous obedience, they applied the baser and more servile instrument without scruple and without remorse.

The penitential discipline of the Church, no doubt, grew up, like other usages, by slow degrees; its regulations were framed into a system to meet the exigences of the times; but we discern, at a very early period, the awful power of condemning to the most profound humiliation, to the most agonising contrition, to the shame of public confession, to the abasing supplication before the priest, to long seclusion from the privileges and the society of the Christian community. Even then public confession was the first process in the fearful yet inevitable ceremonial. “Confession of sin,” says Tertullian (1), “is the proper discipline for the abasement and humiliation of man; it enforces that mode of life which can alone find mercy with God; it prescribes the fitting dress and food of the penitent to be in sackcloth and ashes, to darken the body with filth, to depress the soul with anguish; it allows only the simplest food, enough and no more than will maintain life. Constantly to fast and

(1) De Pœnitentiâ, c. 9.



pray, to groan, to weep, to howl day and night before the Lord our God, to grovel at the feet of the presbyter, to kneel at the altar of God, to implore from all the brethren their deprecatory supplications." Subsequently, the more complete penitential system rigidly regulated the most minute particulars; the attitude, the garb, the language, or the more expressive silence. The place in which the believer stood, showed to the whole Church how far the candidate for salvation through Christ had been thrown back in his spiritual course, what progress he was making to pardon and peace. The penitent was clothed in sackcloth, his head was strewn with ashes; men shaved their heads, women left their dishevelled hair flung over their bosoms, they wore a peculiar veil; the severest attendance on every religious service was exacted, all diversions were proscribed, marriage was not permitted during the time of penance, the lawful indulgence of the marriage bed was forbidden. Although a regular formulary, which gradually grew into use, imposed canonical penances of a certain period for certain offences, yet that period might be rigidly required or shortened by the authority of the bishop. For some offences, the penitent, who it was believed was abandoned to the power of Satan, was excluded from all enjoyment, all honour, and all society, to the close of life; and the doors of reconciliation were hardly opened to the departing spirit,—wonderful proof how profoundly the doctrines of Christianity had sunk into the human heart, and of the enormous power (and what enormous power is not liable to abuse) in which the willing reverence of the people had invested the priesthood.

But something more fearful still remained. Over all the community hung the tremendous sentence of excommunication, tantamount to a sentence of spiritual death (1). This sentence, though not as yet dependent on the will, was pronounced and executed by the religious magistrate. The clergy adhered to certain regular forms of process, but the ultimate decree rested with them.

Excommunication was of two kinds; first, that which excluded from the communion, and threw back the initiate Christian into the ranks of the uninitiate. This separation or suspension allowed the person under ban to enter the church, to hear the psalms and sermon, and, in short, all that was permitted to the catechumen.

Excommu-  
nication.

But the more terrible excommunication by anathema altogether banished the delinquent from the church and the society of Christians; it annulled for ever his hopes of immortality through Christ; it drove him out as an outcast to the dominion of the Evil Spirit. The Christian might not communicate with him in the ordinary

(1) *Interfici Deus jussit sacerdotibus non obtemperantes, judicibus à se ad tempus constitutis non obedientes; sed tunc quidem gladio occidebantur, quando adhuc et circumcizio carnis manebat. Nunc autem quia circumcizio spiritualis esse apud fideles Dei servos cepit,*

*spirituali gladio superbi et contumaces necantur, dum de ecclesiâ ejiciuntur. Cyprian. Epist. lxii. Nunc agit in ecclesiâ excommunicatio, quod agebat tunc in interfectis. Augustin. Q. 39. in Deuterion.*

intercourse of life ; he was a moral leper, whom it was the solemn duty of all to avoid, lest they should partake in his contagion. The sentence of one church was rapidly promulgated throughout Christendom ; and the excommunicated in Egypt or Syria found the churches in Gaul or Spain closed against him : he was an exile without a resting place. As long as Heathenism survived, at least in equal temporal power and distinction , and another society received with welcome, or at least with undiminished respect, the exile from Christianity, the excommunicated might lull his remaining terrors to rest, and forget, in the business or dissipation of the world, his forfeited hopes of immortality. But when there was but one society, that of the Christians, throughout the world, or at best but a feeble and despised minority, he stood a marked and branded man. Those who were, perhaps, not better Christians, but who had escaped the fatal censures of the Church, would perhaps seize the opportunity of showing their zeal by avoiding the outcast : if he did not lose civil privileges, he lost civil estimation ; he was altogether excluded from human respect and human sympathies ; he was a legitimate, almost a designated, object of scorn, distrust, and aversion.

*Synesius.*

The nature, the extent, and some of the moral and even political advantages of excommunications, are illustrated in the act of the celebrated Synesius. The power of the Christian bishop, in his hands, appears under its noblest and most beneficial form. Synesius became a Christian bishop without renouncing the habits, the language, and, in a great degree, the opinions of a philosopher. His writings, more especially his Odes, blend, with a very scanty Christianity, the mystic theology of the later Platonism ; but it is rather philosophy adopting Christian language, than Christianity moulding philosophy to its own uses. Yet so high was the character of Synesius, that even the worldly prelate of Alexandria, Theophilus, approved of his elevation to the episcopate in the obscure town of Ptolemais near Cyrene. Synesius felt the power with which he was invested, and employed it with a wise vigour and daring philanthropy, which commanded the admiration both of philosophy and of religion. The low-born Andronicus was the prefect or rather the scourge and tyrant of Libya ; his exactions were unprecedented, and enforced by tortures of unusual cruelty, even in that age and country. The province groaned and bled, without hope of relief, under the hateful and sanguinary oppression. Synesius had tried in vain the milder language of persuasion upon the intractable tyrant. At length he put forth the terrors of the Church to shield the people ; and for his rapacity, which had amounted to sacrilege, and for his inhumanity, the president of the whole province was openly condemned, by a sentence of excommunication, to the public abhorrence, excluded from the society and denied the common rights

of men. He was expelled from the church, as the Devil from Paradise; every Christian temple, every sanctuary, was closed against the man of blood; the priest was not even to permit him the rights of Christian burial; every private man and every magistrate was to exclude him from their houses and from their tables. If the rest of Christendom refused to ratify and execute the sentence of the obscure Church of Ptolemais, they were guilty of the sin of Schism. The Church of Ptolemais would not communicate or partake of the divine mysteries with those who thus violated ecclesiastical discipline. The excommunication included the accomplices of his guilt, and by a less justifiable extension of power, their families. Andronicus quailed before the interdict, which he feared might find countenance in the court of Constantinople; bowed before the protector of the people, and acknowledged the justice of his sentence (1).

The salutary thunder of sacerdotal excommunication might here and there strike some eminent delinquent (2); but ecclesiastical discipline, which in the earlier and more fervent period of the religion, had watched with holy jealousy the whole life of the individual, was baffled by the increase of votaries, which it could no longer submit to this severe and constant superintendence. The clergy could not command, nor the laity require, the sacred duty of secession and outward penance, from the multitude of sinners, when they were the larger part of the community. But heresy of opinion was more easily detected than heresy of conduct. Gradually, from a moral as well as a religious power, the discipline became almost exclusively religious, or rather confined itself to the speculative, while it almost abandoned in despair the practical effects of religion. Heresy became the one great crime for which excommunication was pronounced in its most awful form; the heretic was the one being with whom it was criminal to associate, who forfeited all the privileges of religion, and all the charities of life.

Ecclesiastical censures chiefly confined to heresy.

Nor was this all; in pursuit of the heretic, the Church was not content to rest within her own sphere, to wield her own arms of moral temperament, and to exclude from her own territory. She formed a fatal alliance with the State, and raised that which was strictly an ecclesiastical, an offence against the religious community, into a civil crime, amenable to temporal penalties. The Church, when she ruled the mind of a religious or superstitious emperor, could not forego the immediate advantage of his authority to further her own cause, and hailed his welcome intrusion on her

Executed by the State.

(1) Synesii Epistolæ, lvii. lviii.

(2) There is a canon of the Council of Toledo (A. D. 408.) that if any man in power shall have robbed one in holy orders, or a *poor man* (*quemlibet pauperiorem*), or a monk, and the bishop shall send to demand a hearing for the cause,

should the man in power treat his message with contempt, letters shall be sent to all the bishops of the province, declaring him excommunicated till he has heard the cause or made restitution. Can xi. Labbe, ii. 1225.



own internal legislation. In fact, the autocracy of the Emperor over the Church, as well as over the State, was asserted in all those edicts which the Church, in its blind zeal, hailed with transport as the marks of his allegiance, but which confounded in inextricable, and to the present time, in deplorable confusion, the limits of the religious and the civil power. The imperial rescripts, which made heresy a civil offence, by affixing penalties which were not purely religious, trespassed as much upon the real principles of the original religious republic, as against the immutable laws of conscience and Christian charity. The tremendous laws of Theodosius (1), constituting heresy a capital offence, punishable by the civil power, are said to have been enacted only as a terror to evil-believers, but they betrayed too clearly the darkening spirit of the times; the next generation would execute what the laws of the last would enact. The most distinguished bishops of the time raised a cry of horror at the first executions for religion; but it was their humanity which was startled; they did not perceive that they had sanctioned, by the smallest civil penalty, a false and fatal principle; that though, by the legal establishment, the Church and the State had become, in one sense, the same body, yet the associating principle of each remained entirely distinct, and demanded an entirely different and independent system of legislation, and administration of the law. The Christian hierarchy bought the privilege of persecution at the price of Christian independence.

It is difficult to decide whether the language of the book in the Theodosian code, entitled "On Heretics," contrasts more strongly with the comprehensive, equitable, and parental tone of the Roman jurisprudence, or with the gentle and benevolent spirit of the Gospel, or even with the primary principles of the ecclesiastical community (2). The Emperor, of his sole and supreme authority, without any recognition of ecclesiastical advice or sanction; the Emperor, who might himself be an Arian or Eunomian, or Manichean—who had so recently been an Arian, defines heresy the very slightest deviation from Catholic verity, and in a succession of statutes inflicts civil penalties, and excludes, from the common rights of men, the maintainers of certain opinions. Nothing treasonable, immoral, dangerous to the peace of society, is alleged; the crime, the civil crime, as it now becomes, consists solely in opinions. The law of Constantine, which granted special immunities to certain of his subjects, might perhaps, with some show of equity, confine those immunities to a particular class (3). But the gradually darkening statutes proceed from the withholding of pri-

Civil punishment for ecclesiastical offences.

(1) See ch. viii. vol. iii. p. 184.

(2) *Hæreticorum vocabulo continentur, et latis adversus eos sanctionibus debent succumbere, qui vel levi argumento à judicio Catholicæ religionis et tramite detecti fuerint deviare.* This

is a law of Arcadius. The practice was more lenient than the law.

(3) The first law of Constantine restricts the immunities which he grants to Catholics. Cod. Theodos. xvi.

vilage to the prohibition of their meetings (1), then through confiscation (2), the refusal of the common right of bequeathing property, fine (3), exile (4), to capital punishment (5). The latter, indeed, was enacted only against some of the more obscure sects, and some of the Donatists, whose turbulent and seditious conduct might demand the interference of the civil power; but still they are condemned not as rebels and insurgents but as heretics (6).

In building up this vast and majestic fabric of the hierarchy, though individuals might be actuated by personal ambition or interest, and the narrow corporate spirit might rival loftier motives in the consolidation of ecclesiastical power, yet the great object, which was steadily, if dimly seen, was the advancement of mankind in religion, and through religion to temporal and eternal happiness. Dazzled by the glorious spectacle of provinces, of nations, gradually brought within the pale of Christianity, the great men of the fourth century of Christianity were not and could not be endowed with prophetic sagacity to discern the abuses of sacerdotal domination, and the tyranny which, long centuries after, might be exercised over the human mind in the name of religion. *We* may trace the hierarchical principle of Cyprian or of Ambrose to what may seem their natural consequences, religious crusades and the fires of the inquisition; *we* may observe the tendency of unsocial monasticism to quench the charities of life, to harden into cruelty, grovel into licentiousness, and brood over its own ignorance; *we* may trace the predestinarian doctrines of Augustine darkening into narrow bigotry, or maddening to uncharitable fanaticism; *they* only contemplated, *they* only could contemplate, a great moral and religious power opposing civil tyranny, or at least affording a refuge from it; purifying domestic morals, elevating and softening the human heart (7); a wholesome and benevolent force compelling men by

Objects of  
the great  
defenders  
of the  
hierarchical  
power.

(1) The law of Gratian (IV.) confiscates the houses or even fields in which heretical conventicles are held. See also law of Theodosius, viii.

(2) *Leges* xi. xii.

(3) *Ibid.* xxi.

(4) *Ibid.* xviii. liii. lviii.

(5) The law of Theodosius enacts this not against the general body, but some small sections of Manicheans, "Summo supplicio et inexpiabili poenâ jubemus affligi." ix. This law sanctions the ill-omened name of inquisitors. Compare law xxxv. The "interminata poenâ" of law ix. is against Eunomians, Arians, and Macedonians.

(6) Ad Heraclianum, lvi. The imperial laws against second baptisms are still more singular invasions of the civil upon the ecclesiastical authority. xvi. tit. vi.

(7) The laws bear some pleasing testimonies to the activity of Christian benevolence in many of the obscure scenes of human wretchedness. See the humane law regarding prisoners, that they might have proper food, and the use of the bath. *Nec deerit antistitum Christianæ religionis cura laudabilis, quæ ad observationem constituti judicis hanc ingerat monitionem.* The Christian

bishop was to take care that the judge did his duty. *Cod. Theodos.* ix. 3. 7.

As early as the reign of Valentinian and Valens, prisoners were released at Easter (*ob diem paschæ, quem intimo corde celebramus*), excepting those committed for the crimes of treason, poisoning, magic, adultery, rape, or homicide, ix. 36. 3, 4. These statutes were constantly renewed, with the addition of some more excepted crimes—sacrilege, robbery of tombs, and coining.

There is a very singular law of Arcadius prohibiting the clergy and the monks from interfering with the execution of the laws, and forcibly taking away condemned criminals from the hands of justice. They were allowed, at the same time, the amplest privilege of merciful intercession. This was connected with the privilege of asylum. *Codex Theodos.* ix. 40. 16.

There is another singular law by which corporal punishments were not to be administered in Lent, except against the Isaurian robbers, who were to be dealt with without delay. ix. 35. 5, 6, 7.

legitimate means to seek wisdom, virtue, and salvation; the better part of mankind withdrawing, in holy prudence and wise timidity, from the corruption of a foul and cruel age, and devoting itself to its own self-advancement, to the highest spiritual perfection; and the general pious assertion of the universal and unlimited providence and supremacy of God. None but the hopeful achieve great revolutions; and what hopes could equal those which the loftier Christian minds might justly entertain of the beneficent influences of Christianity?

Dignity  
and advan-  
tage of  
the clerical  
sta-  
tion.

We cannot wonder at the growth of the ecclesiastical power, if the Church were merely considered as a new sphere in which human genius, virtue, and benevolence, might develope their unimpeded energies, and rise above the general debasement. This was almost the only way in which any man could devote great abilities or generous activity to a useful purpose with reasonable hopes of success. The civil offices were occupied by favour and intrigue, often acquired most easily and held most permanently by the worst men for the worst purposes; the utter extinction of freedom had left no course of honourable distinction, as an honest advocate or an independent jurist; literature was worn out; rhetoric had degenerated into technical subtlety; philosophy had lost its hold upon the mind; even the great military commands were filled by fierce and active barbarians, on whose energy Rome relied for the protection of her frontiers. In the Church alone was security, influence, independence, fame, even wealth, and the opportunity of serving mankind. The pulpit was the only rostrum from which the orator would be heard; feeble as was the voice of Christian poetry, it found an echo in the human heart: the episcopate was the only office of dignity which could be obtained without meanness, or exercised without fear. Whether he sought the peace of a contemplative, or the usefulness of an active life, this was the only sphere for the man of conscious mental strength; and if he felt the inward satisfaction that he was either securing his own, or advancing the salvation of others, the lofty mind would not hesitate what path to choose through the darkening and degraded world.

General  
influence  
of the  
clergy.

The just way to consider the influence of the Christian hierarchy (without which, in its complete and vigorous organisation it is clear that the religion could not have subsisted throughout these ages of disaster and confusion) is to imagine, if possible, the state of things without that influence. A tyranny the most oppressive and debasing, without any principles of free or hopeful resistance, or resistance only attainable by the complete dismemberment of the Roman empire, and its severance into a number of hostile states; the general morals at the lowest state of depravation, with nothing but a religion totally without influence, and a philosophy without authority, to correct its growing cruelty and licentiousness; a very large portion



of mankind in hopeless slavery, with nothing to mitigate it but the insufficient control of fear in the master, or occasional gleams of humanity or political foresight in the government, with no inward consolation or feeling of independence whatever. In the midst of this, the invasion of hostile barbarians in every quarter, and the complete wreck of civilisation; with no commanding influence to assimilate the adverse races, without the protection or conservative tendency of any religious feeling to soften; at length to reorganise and re-create, literature, the arts of building, painting, and music; the Latin language itself breaking up into as many countless dialects as there were settlements of barbarous tribes, without a guardian or sacred depositary; it is difficult adequately to darken the picture of ignorance, violence, confusion, and wretchedness; but without this adequate conception of the probable state of the world without it, it is impossible to judge with fairness or candour the obligations of Europe and of civilisation to the Christian hierarchy.

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## CHAPTER II.

### PUBLIC SPECTACLES.

THE Greek and Roman inhabitants of the empire were attached with equal intensity to their favourite spectacles, whether of more solemn religious origin, or of lighter and more festive kind. These amusements are perhaps more congenial to the southern character, from the greater excitability of temperament, the less variable climate, which rarely interferes with enjoyment in the open air, and throughout the Roman world, had long been fostered by those republican institutions which gave to every citizen a place and an interest in all public ceremonials, and which, in this respect, still survived the institutions themselves. The population of the great capitals had preserved only the dangerous and pernicious part of freedom, the power of subsisting either without regular industry or with but moderate exertion. The perpetual distribution of corn, and the various largesses at other times, emancipated them in a great degree from the wholesome control of their own necessities; and a vast and uneducated multitude was maintained in idle and dissolute inactivity. It was absolutely necessary to occupy much of this vacant time with public diversions; and the invention, the wealth, and the personal exertions of the higher orders, were taxed to gratify this insatiable appetite. Policy demanded that which ambition and the love of popularity had freely supplied in the days of the republic, and which personal vanity continued to offer, though with

Public  
spectacles.

less prodigal and willing munificence. The more retired and domestic habits of Christianity might in some degree seclude a sect from the public diversions, but it could not change the nature or the inveterate habits of a people : it was either swept along by, or contented itself with giving a new direction to, the impetuous and irresistible current ; it was obliged to substitute some new excitement for that which it peremptorily prohibited, and reluctantly to acquiesce in that which it was unable to suppress.

Christianity had cut off that part of the public spectacles which belonged exclusively to Paganism. Even if all the temples at Rome were not, as Jerome asserts, covered with dust and cobwebs (1), yet, notwithstanding the desperate efforts of the old aristocracy, the tide of popular interest, no doubt, set away from the deserted and mouldering fanes of the Heathen deities, and towards the churches of the Christians. And if this was the case in Rome, at Constantinople and throughout the empire, the Pagan ceremonial was either extinct, or gradually expiring, or lingering on in unimpressive regularity. On the other hand, the modest and unimposing ritual of Christianity naturally, and almost necessarily, expanded into pomp and dignity. To the deep devotion of the early Christians the place and circumstances of worship were indifferent : piety finds every where its own temple. In the low and unfurnished chamber, in the forest, in the desert, in the catacomb, the Christian adored his Redeemer, prayed, chanted his hymn, and partook of the sacred elements. Devotion wanted no accessories ; faith needed no subsidiary excitement ; or if it did, it found them in the peril, the novelty, the adventurous and stirring character of the scene, or in the very meanness and poverty, contrasted with the gorgeous worship which it had abandoned ; in the mutual attachment, and in the fervent emulation, which spreads throughout a small community.

Religious  
ceremo-  
nial.

But among the more numerous and hereditary Christians of this period, the temple and the solemn service were indispensable to enforce and maintain the devotion. Religion was not strong enough to disdain, and far too earnest to decline, any legitimate means of advancing her cause. The whole ceremonial was framed with the art which arises out of the intuitive perception of that which is effective towards its end ; that which was felt to be awful was adopted to enforce awe ; that which drew the people to the church, and affected their minds when there, became sanctified to the use of the church. The edifice itself arose more lofty with the triumph of the faith, and enlarged itself to receive the multiplying votaries. Christianity disdained that its God and its Redeemer should be less magnificently honoured than the dæmons of Paganism. In the service it delighted to transfer and to breathe, as it were, a sublimer sense into

(1) Fuligine et aranearum telis omnia Romæ delubra semiruta, currit ad martyrum tumulos, templa cooperta sunt : inundans populus ante Epist. lviii. p. 590.

the common appellations of the Pagan worship, whether from the ordinary ceremonial, or the more secret mysteries. The church became a temple (1); the table of the communion an altar; the celebration of the Eucharist the appalling or the unbloody sacrifice (2). The ministering functionaries multiplied with the variety of the ceremonial; each was consecrated to his office by a lower kind of ordination; but a host of subordinate attendants by degrees swelled the officiating train. The incense, the garlands, the lamps, all were gradually adopted by zealous rivalry, or seized as the lawful spoils of vanquished Paganism, and consecrated to the service of Christ.

The Church rivalled the old Heathen mysteries in expanding by slow degrees its higher privileges. Christianity was itself the great Mystery, unfolded gradually and in general after a long and searching probation. It still reserved the power of opening at once its gates to the more distinguished proselytes, and of jealously and tardily unclosing them to more doubtful neophytes. It permitted its sanctuary, as it were, to be stormed at once by eminent virtue and unquestioned zeal; but the common mass of mankind were never allowed to consider it less than a hard-own privilege to be received into the Church; and this boon was not to be dispensed with lavish or careless hands (3). Its preparatory ceremonial of abstinence, personal purity, ablution, secrecy, closely resembled that of the Pagan mysteries (perhaps each may have contributed to the other); so the theologic dialect of Christianity spoke the same language. Yet Christianity substituted for the feverish enthusiasm of some of these rites, and the phantasmagoric terrors of others, with their vague admonitions to purity, a searching but gently administered moral discipline, and more sober religious excitement. It retained, indeed, much of the dramatic power, though under another form.

The divisions between the different orders of worshippers enforced by the sacerdotal authority, and observed with humble submission by the people, could not but impress the mind with astonishment and awe. The stranger, on entering the spacious open court, which was laid out before the more splendid churches, with porticos or cloisters on each side, beheld first the fountain or tank, where the worshippers were expected to wash their hands, and purify themselves, as it were, for the divine presence. Linger-  
 ing in these porticos, or approaching timidly the threshold which they dared not pass, or, at the farthest, entering only into the first porch, or vestibule (4), and pressing around the disciples to solicit their

Divisions  
of the  
church.

The porch.

(1) Ambrose and Lactantius, and even Irenæus, use this term. See Bingham, b. viii. l. 4.

(2) The *φρικτή*, or the *ἀναίματος θυσία*.

(3) It is one of the bitterest charges of Tertullian against the heretics, that they did not keep up this distinction between the catechumens and the faithful. "Imprimis quis catechu-

menus, quis fidelis, incertum est: pariter adeunt, pariter orant." Even the Heathen were admitted; thus "pearls were cast before swine." De Præscript. Hæret. c. 44.

(4) There is much difficulty and confusion respecting these divisions of the church. The fact probably is, that, according to the period



prayers, he would observe men, pale, dejected, clad in sackcloth, oppressed with the profound consciousness of their guilt, acquiescing in the justice of the ecclesiastical censure, which altogether excluded them from the Christian community. These were the first class of penitents, men of notorious guilt, whom only a long period of this humiliating probation could admit even within the hearing of the sacred service. As he advanced to the gates, he must pass the scrutiny of the doorkeepers, who guarded the admission into the church, and distributed each class of worshippers into their proper place. The stranger, whether Heathen or Jew, might enter into the part assigned to the catechumens or novices and the penitents of the second order (the hearers), that he might profit by the religious instruction (1). He found himself in the first division of the main body of the church, of which the walls were lined by various marbles, the roof often ceiled with mosaic, and supported by lofty columns, with gilded capitals; the doors were inlaid with ivory or silver; the distant altar glittered with precious stones (2). In the midst of the nave stood the pulpit, or reading-desk (the ambo), around which were arranged the singers, who chanted to the most solemn music, poetry, much of it familiar to the Jew, as belonging to his own sacred writings, to the Heathen full of the noblest images, expressive of the divine power and goodness; adapting itself with the most exquisite versatility to every devout emotion, melting into the most pathetic tenderness, or swelling out into the most appalling grandeur. The pulpit was then ascended by one of the inferior order, the reader of certain portions or extracts from the sacred volumes, in which God himself spoke to the awe-struck auditory. He was succeeded by an orator of a higher dignity, a pres-

The  
penitents.

The nar-  
thex.

or the local circumstances, the structure and the arrangement were more or less complicated. Tertullian says distinctly, "non modo limine verum omni ecclesie tecto submovemus." Where the churches were of a simpler form, and had no roofed narthex or vestibule, these penitents stood in the open court before the church; even later, the flentes and the hiemantes formed a particular class.

A canon of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus gives the clearest view of these arrangements: Ἡ πρόσκλαυσις ἔξω τῆς πύλης τοῦ εὐκτηρίου ἐστίν, ἐνθα ἐστῶτα τὸν ἀμαρτάνοντα χρὴ τῶν εἰσιόντων δεῖσθαι πιστῶν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ εὐχεσθαι· ἢ ἀκρόασις ἐνδοθὶ τῆς πύλης ἐν τῷ νάρθηκι, ἐνθα ἐστάναι χρὴ τὸν ἡμαρτηκότα, ἕως τῶν κατηχομένων, καὶ ἐντεῦθεν ἐξέρχεσθαι· ἀκούων γὰρ φησι τῶν γραφῶν καὶ τῆς διδασκαλίας, ἐκβαλέσθαι, καὶ μὴ ἀξιούσθω προσευχῆς. ἢ δὲ ὑπόπτωσις, ἵνα ἐταθεν τῆς πύλης τοῦ ναοῦ ἱσταμένως, μετὰ τῶν κατηχομένων ἐξέρχεται· ἢ σύστασις, ἵνα συνίσταται τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ μὴ ἐξέρχεται μετὰ τῶν

κατηχομένων· τελευταῖον ἢ μέβρις τῶν ἀγισμάτων. Apud Labbe, Conc. i. p. 842.

(1) This part of the church was usually called the narthex. But this term, I believe, of the sixth century, was not used with great precision, or rather, perhaps, was applied to different parts of the church, according to their greater or less complexity of structure. It is sometimes used for the porch or vestibule: in this sense there were several nartheces (St. Sophia had four). Mauachi (vol. i. p. 216.) insists that it was divided from the nave by a wall. But this cannot mean the narthex into which the ἀκροώμενοι were admitted, as the object of their admission was that they might hear the service.

Episcopus nullum prohibeat intrare ecclesiam, et audire verbum Dei, sive hæreticum, sive Judæum usque ad missam catechumenorum. Concil. Carthag. iv. c. 84.

(2) Alii ædificant ecclesias, vestiant parietes marmorum crustis, columnarum moles advehant, earumque dearent capita, pretiosum ornatum non sentiant, ebore argenteque valvas, et gemmis distinguant altaria. Non reprehendo, non abnuo. Hieronym. Epist. viii. ad Demetriad.

byter or a bishop, who sometimes addressed the people from the steps which led up to the chancel, sometimes chose the more convenient and elevated position of the ambo (1). He was a man usually of the highest attainments and eloquence, and instead of the frivolous and subtile questions which the Pagan was accustomed to hear in the schools of rhetoric or philosophy, he fearlessly agitated and peremptorily decided on such eternally and universally awakening topics as the responsibility of man before God, the immortality and future destination of the soul ; topics of which use could not deaden the interest to the believer, but which, to an unaccustomed ear, were as startling as important. The mute attention of the whole assembly was broken only by uncontrollable acclamations, which frequently interrupted the more moving preachers. Around the pulpit was the last order of penitents, who prostrated themselves in humble homage during the prayers, and the benediction of the bishop.

The  
preacher.

Here the steps of the profane stranger must pause ; an insuperable barrier, which he could not pass without violence, secluded the initiate from the society of the less perfect. Yet, till the more secret ceremonial began, he might behold, at dim and respectful distance, the striking scene, first of the baptized worshippers in their order, the females in general in galleries above ( the virgins separate from the matrons). Beyond, in still further secluded sanctity, on an elevated semicircle, around the bishop, sate the clergy, attended by the subdeacons, acolyths, and those of inferior order. Even the gorgeous throne of the Emperor was below this platform. Before them was the mystic and awful table, the altar as it began to be called in the fourth century, over which was sometimes suspended a richly-wrought canopy ( the ciborium ) : it was covered with fine linen. In the third century, the simpler vessels of glass or other cheap material had given place to silver and gold. In the later persecutions, the cruelty of the Heathen was stimulated by their avarice ; and some of the sufferers, while they bore their own agonies with patience, were grieved to the heart to see the sacred vessels pillaged, and turned to profane or indecent uses. In the Eastern churches, richly embroidered curtains overshadowed the approach to the altar, or light doors secluded altogether the Holy of Holies from the profane gaze of the multitude.

Such was the ordinary Christian ceremonial, as it addressed the mass of mankind. But at a certain time, the uninitiate were dismissed, the veil was dropped which shrouded the hidden rites, the doors were closed, profane steps might not cross the threshold of the baptistery, or linger in the church, when the Liturgy of the faith-

(1) Chrysostom generally preached from the ambo. Soer. vi. 5. Sozomen, viii. 5. Both usages prevailed in the West.

Seu te conspicuis gradibus venerabilis aræ

Concionaturum plebs sedula circumistat

Sid. Apollon. can. xvi

Fronte sub adversa gradibus sublime tribunal

Tollitur, antistes predicat uide Deum.

Prudent. Hymn. ad Hippolit

Secrecy of  
the sacra-  
ments.

ful, the office of the eucharist, began. The veil of concealment was first spread over the peculiar rites of Christianity from caution. The religious assemblies were, strictly speaking, unlawful, and they were shrouded in secrecy lest they should be disturbed by the intrusion of their watchful enemies (1); and it was this unavoidable secrecy which gave rise to the frightful fables of the Heathen concerning the nature of these murderous or incestuous banquets. As they could not be public, of necessity they took the form of mysteries, and as mysteries became objects of jealousy and of awe. As the assemblies became more public, that seclusion of the more solemn rites was retained from dread and reverence, which was commenced from fear. Though profane curiosity no longer dared to take a hostile character, it was repelled from the sacred ceremony. Of the mingled multitude, Jews and Heathens, the incipient believers, the hesitating converts, who must be permitted to hear the Gospel of Christ, or the address of the preacher, none could be admitted to the sacraments. It was natural to exclude them, not merely by regulation, and the artificial division of the church into separate parts, but by the majesty which invested the last solemn rites. That which had concealed itself from fear; became itself fearful: it was no longer a timid mystery which fled the light, but an unapproachable communion with the Deity, which would not brook profane intrusion. It is an extraordinary indication of the power of Christianity, that rites in themselves so simple, and of which the nature, after all the concealment, could not but be known, should assume such unquestioned majesty; that, however significant, the simple lustration by water, and the partaking of bread and wine, should so affect the awe-struck imagination, as to make men suppose themselves ignorant of what these sacraments really were, and even when the high-wrought expectations were at length gratified, to experience no dissatisfaction at their plain, and in themselves, unappalling ceremonies. The mysteriousness was no doubt fed and heightened by the regulations of the clergy, and by the impressiveness of the service (2), but it grew of itself out of the profound and general religious sentiment. The baptistery and the altar were closed against the uninitiate, but if they had been open, men would scarcely have ventured to approach them. The knowledge of the nature of the sacraments was reserved for the baptized; but it was because the minds of the unbaptized were sealed by trembling reverence, and shuddered to anticipate the forbidden knowledge. The hearers had

(1) Tot hostes ejus, quot extranei \* \* quotidie prodimus, in ipsis plurimum cœtibus et congregationibus opprimimur. Tertull. Apologet. 7.

(2) This was the avowed object of the clergy. Catechumenis sacramenta fidelium non produntur, non ideo fit, quod ea ferre non possunt, sed ut ab eis tanto ardentius concupiscantur, quanto honorabilius occultantur. August. in Johan.

96. Mortalium generi naturâ datum est, ut abstrusa fortius quærat, ut negata magis ambiat, ut tardius adepta plus diligit, et eo flagrantius ametur veritas, quo vel diutius desideratur, vel laboriosius queritur, vel tardius invenitur. Claudius Mamert; quoted by Casaubon in Baron. p. 497.



a vague knowledge of these mysteries floating around them, the initiate heard it within (1). To add to the impressiveness, night was sometimes spread over the Christian as over the Pagan mysteries (2).

At Easter, and at Pentecost (3), and in some places at the Epiphany, the rite of Baptism was administered publicly (that is, in the presence of the Faithful) to all the converts of the year, excepting those few instances in which it had been expedient to perform the ceremony without delay, or where the timid Christian put it off till the close of life (4); a practice for a long time condemned in vain by the clergy. But the fact of the delay shows how deeply the importance and efficacy of the rite were rooted in the Christian mind. It was a complete lustration of the soul. The Neophyte emerged from the waters of Baptism in a state of perfect innocence. The Dove (the Holy Spirit) was constantly hovering over the font, and sanctifying the waters to the mysterious ablution of all the sins of the passed life. If the soul suffered no subsequent taint, it passed at once to the realms of purity and bliss; the heart was purified; the understanding illuminated; the spirit was clothed with immortality (5). Robed in white, emblematic of spotless purity (6), the candidate approached the baptistery, in the larger churches a separate building. There he uttered the solemn vows which pledged him to his religion (7). The symbolising genius of the East added some significant ceremonies. The Catechumen turned to the West, the realm of Satan, and thrice renounced his power; he turned to the East to adore the Sun of Righteousness (8), and to proclaim his compact with the Lord of Life. The mystic trinal number prevailed throughout; the vow was threefold, and thrice pronounced. The baptism was usually by immersion; the stripping off the clothes was emblematic of "putting off the old man;" but baptism by sprinkling was allowed, according to the exigency of the case. The water itself became, in the vivid language of the Church, the blood of Christ: it was compared, by a fanciful analogy, to the Red Sea: the daring

Baptism.

(1) The inimitable pregnancy of the Greek language expresses this by two verbs differently compounded. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his *Procathechesis*, states the Catechumens *περιπλνίσθαι*, the Faithful *ἐνπλνίσθαι*, by the meaning of the mysteries.

(2) *Noctu ritus multus in mysteriis pergebatur; noctu etiam initiatio Christianorum inchoabatur*, Casaubon, p. 490., with the quotations subjoined.

(3) At Constantinople, it appears from Chrysostom, baptism did not take place at Pentecost. Montfaucon, *Diatriba*, p. 179.

(4) The memorable example of Constantine may for a time not only have illustrated but likewise confirmed the practice. See Gibbon's note (vol. iii. p. 266.) and the author's observations.

(5) Gregory of Nazianzen almost exhausts the copiousness of the Greek language in speaking of Baptism, — *δαῖρον καλοῦμεν, χάρισμα*,

*ἐάπτισμα, χρίσμα, φώτισμα, ἀσθαρσίας ἐνδύμα, λοῦτρον παλιγγενεσίας, σораγίδα, πᾶν ὅτι τίμιον*. *Orat. xi. de Baptismo*.

Almost all the Fathers of this age, Basil, the two Gregories, Ambrose (de Sacram.) Augustine, have treatises on baptism, and vie, as it were, with each other, in their praises of its importance and efficacy.

(6) *Unde parens sacro ducit de fonte sacerdos Infantes niveos corpore, corde, habitu*.

Paulin. ad Sever.

(7) Chrysostom in two places gives the Eastern profession of faith, which was extremely simple, "I renounce Satan, his pomp and worship, and am united to Christ. I believe in the resurrection of the dead." See references in Montfaucon, *ubi supra*.

(8) Cyril. *Catech. Mystag.* Hieronym. in Amos, vi. 14.

metaphors of some of the Fathers might seem to assert a transmutation of its colour (1).

Eucharist.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper imperceptibly acquired the solemnity, the appellation, of a sacrifice. The poetry of devotional language kindled into the most vivid and realising expressions of awe and adoration. No imagery could be too bold, no words too glowing, to impress the soul more profoundly with the sufferings, the divinity, the intimate union of the Redeemer with his disciples. The invisible presence of the Lord, which the devout felt within the whole church, but more particularly in its more holy and secluded part, was gradually concentrated as it were upon the altar. The mysterious identification of the Redeemer with the consecrated elements was first felt by the mind, till, at a later period, a material and corporeal transmutation began to be asserted; that which the earlier Fathers, in their boldest figure, called a bloodless sacrifice, became an actual oblation of the body and blood of Christ. But all these fine and subtle distinctions belong to a later theology. In the dim vagueness, in the ineffable and inexplicable mystery, consisted much of its impressiveness on the believer, the awe and dread of the uninitiate.

These Sacraments were the sole real Mysteries; their nature and effects were the hidden knowledge which was revealed to the perfect alone (2). In Alexandria, where the imitation or rivalry of the ancient mysteries, in that seat of the Platonic learning, was most likely to prevail, the catechetical school of Origen attempted to form the simpler truths of the Gospel into a regular and progressive system of development (3). The works of Clement of Alexandria were progressive, addressed to the Heathen, the Catechumen, the perfect Christian. But the doctrine which was there reserved for the initiate had a strange tinge of Platonic mysticism. In the church in general the only esoteric doctrine, as we have said, related to the sacraments. After the agitation of the Trinitarian question, there seems to have been some desire to withdraw that holy mystery likewise from the gaze of the profane, which the popular tumults, the conflicts between the Arians and Athanasians of the lowest orders, in the streets of Constantinople and Alexandria, show to have been by no means successful. The apocalyptic hymn, the

(1) Unde rubet Baptismus Christi, nisi Christi sanguine consecratur August. Tract. in Johan. Compare Bingham, xi. 10. 4.

(2) Quid est quod occultum est et non publicum in Ecclesiâ, Sacramentum Baptismi, Sacramentum Eucharistie. Opera nostra bona vident et Pagani, Sacramenta vero occultantur illis. Augustine, in Psalm 103. Ordination appears to have been a secret rite. Casaubon, p. 495. Compare this treatise of Casaubon, the xvth of his Exercitationes Anti-Baroniane, which in general is profound and judicious—

(3) Upon this ground rests the famous Disciplina Arcani, that esoteric doctrine, within

which lurked every thing which later ages thought proper to dignify by the name of the traditions of the church. This theory was first fully developed by Schelstrate, "De Disciplina Arcani," and is very clearly stated in Pagi, sub. Ann. 118. It rests chiefly on a passage of Origen (contra Cels. i. 7.) who, after asserting the publicity of the main doctrines of Christianity, the incarnation, passion, and resurrection of Christ, and the general resurrection to judgment, admits that Christianity, like Philosophy, had some secret and esoteric doctrines. Pagi argues that, as the Trinity was not among the public, it must have been among the esoteric tenets.

Trisagion, makes a part indeed of all the older liturgies, which belong to the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century. Even the simple prayer of our Lord, which might seem appropriate to universal man, and so intended by the Saviour himself, was considered too holy to be uttered by unbaptised lips. It was said that none but the baptised could properly address the Almighty as his Father (1).

That care which Christianity had assumed over the whole life of man, it did not abandon after death. In that solemn season it took in charge the body, which, though mouldering into dust, was to be revived for the resurrection. The respect and honour which human nature pays to the remains of the dead, and which, among the Greeks especially, had a strong religious hold upon the feelings, was still more profoundly sanctified by the doctrines and usages of Christianity. The practice of inhumation which prevailed in Egypt and Syria, and in other parts of the East, was gradually extended over the whole western world by Christianity (2). The funeral pyre went out of use, and the cemeteries, which from the earliest period belonged to the Christians, were gradually enlarged for the general reception, not of the ashes only in their urns, but for the entire remains of the dead. The Eastern practice of embalming was so general (3), that Tertullian boasts that the Christians consumed more of the merchandise of Sabæa in their interments than the Heathens in the fumigations before the altars of their Gods (4). The general tone of the simple inscriptions spoke of death but as a sleep; "he sleeps in peace" was the common epitaph: the very name of the inclosure, the *cemetery*, implied the same trust in its temporary occupancy; those who were committed to the earth only awaited the summons to a new life (5). Gradually the cemetery was, in some places, closely connected with the church. Where the rigid interdict against burying within the walls of cities was either inapplicable or not enforced, the open court before the Church became the place of burial (6).

Christian  
funerals.

(1) Bingham, i. 4. 7. and x. 5. 9.

(2) Nec, ut creditis, ullum damnum sepulture timemus, sed veterem et meliorem consuetudinem humandi frequentamus. The speaker goes on, in very elegant language, to allude the analogy of the death and revival of nature.—Expectandum etiam nobis corporis ver est. Minuc. Fel. edit. Ouzel, p. 327.

During the time of the plague in Alexandria and Carthage, the Christians not only buried their own dead, but likewise those of the Pagans. Dion. Alex. apud Euseb. Hist. vii. 22. Pontius, in Vitâ Cypriani. Compare a curious Essay in the Vernäsichte Schriften of Bottiger, iii. 14. Verbrinnen oder Beerdigen.

(3) Titulumque et frigida saxa  
Liquido spargemus odore.

Prudent. Hymn. de Exeq.

Martyris hi tumulum studeant perfundere mardo  
Et medicata pio referant unguenta sepulcro.

Paul. Nol. in Nat. C. Fel.

(4) Apologet. c. 42. Boldetti affirms that these odours were plainly perceptible on opening some of the christian cemeteries at Rome, Sec Mamachi, Costumi dei Christiani. iii. p. 83. The judge in the acts of Tarachus (Ruinart, p. 385.) says, "you expect that your women will bury your body with ointments and spices."

(5) Hinc maxima cura sepulchris  
Impenditur, hinc resolutos  
Honor ultimus accipit artus  
Et funeris ambitus ornat.

Quid nam tibi saxa cavata,  
Quid pulchra volunt monumenta?  
Res quod nisi creditur illis  
Non mortua, sed data somno.

Prudent. in Exeq. Defunct.

(6) There is a law of Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius, forbidding burial, or the deposition of urns (which shows that cremation was still common), within the walls of Constantinople,



Christian funerals began early in their period of security and opulence to be celebrated with great magnificence. Jerome compares the funeral procession of Fabiola to the triumphs of Camillus, Scipio, or Pompey. The character of this female, who founded the first hospital in Rome, and lavished a splendid fortune in almsgiving, may have mainly contributed to the strong interest excited by her interment. All Rome was poured forth. The streets, the windows, the tops of houses, were crowded with spectators. Processions of youths and of old men preceded the bier, chaunting the praises of the deceased. As it passed, the churches were crowded, and psalms were sung, and their golden roofs rang with the sublime Alleluia.

Worship  
of the  
Martyrs.

The doctrine of the Resurrection of the body deepened the common and natural feeling of respect for the remains of the dead (1) : the worship of the relics of saints and martyrs still farther contributed to the same effect. If the splendid but occasional ceremony of the apotheosis of the deceased emperor was exploded, a ceremony which, lavished as it frequently had been on the worst and basest of mankind, however it might amuse and excite the populace, could not but provoke the contempt of the virtuous ; in the Christian world a continual, and in some respects more rational, certainly more modest, apotheosis was constantly celebrated. The more distinguished Christians were dismissed, if not to absolute deification, to immortality, to a state, in which they retained profound interest in, and some influence over, the condition of men. During the perilous and gloomy days of persecution, the reverence for those who endured martyrdom for the religion of Christ had

even within the cemeteries of the apostles or martyrs. Cod. Theod. ix. 17. 6.

(1) In one of the very curious essays of M. Raoul Rochette, Mémoires de l'Académie, he has illustrated the extraordinary care with which the heathen buried along with the remains of the dead, every kind of utensil, implement of trade, down to the dolls of children ; even food and knives and forks. This appears from all the tombs which are opened, from the most ancient Etruscan to the most modern heathen sepulchres. " Il y avait là une notion confuse et grossière sans doute de l'immortalité de l'âme, mais il s'y trouvait aussi la preuve sensible et palpable de cet instinct de l'homme, qui répugne à l'idée de la destruction de son être, et qui y résiste de toutes les forces de son intelligence et de toutes les erreurs mêmes de la raison." p. 689. But it is a more remarkable fact that the Christians long adhered to the same usages, notwithstanding the purer and loftier notions of another life bestowed by their religion. " La première observation qui s'offre à Boldetti lui-même et qui devra frapper tous les esprits, c'est qu'en décorant les tombeaux de leurs frères de tant d'objets de pur ornement, ou d'usage réel, les Chrétiens n'avaient pu être dirigés que par ce motif d'espérance qui leur faisait considérer le tombeau comme un lieu de passage, d'où ils devaient sortir avec toutes les conditions de l'immortalité, et

la mort, comme un *sommeil paisible*, au sein duquel il ne pouvait leur être indifférent de se trouver environnés des objets qui leur avaient été chers durant la vie, ou de l'image de ces objets," tom. xiii. p. 692.

The heathen practice of burying money, sometimes large sums, with the dead, was the cause of the very severe laws against the violations of the tombs. In fact, these treasures were so great, as to be a source of revenue, which the government was unwilling to share with unlicensed plunderers. Et si aurum, ut dicitur, vel argentum fuerit tuâ indagazione detectum, compendio publico fideliter vindicabis, ita tamen ut abstineatis a cineribus mortuorum. *Ædificia tegant cineres, columnæ vel marmora ornent sepulcra : talenta non teneant, qui commercia virorum reliquerunt. Aurum enim justè sepulcro detrahatur, ubi dominus non habetur ; imò culpæ genus est inutiliter addita relinquere mortuorum, unde se vita potest sustentare viventium.* Such are the instructions of the minister of Theodoric. Cassiod. Var. iv. 34.

But it is still more strange that the Christians continued this practice, particularly of the piece of money in the mouth, which the Heathen intended for the payment of Charon. It continued to the time of Thomas Aquinas, who, according to M. R. Rochette, wrote against it.

grown up out of the best feelings of man's improved nature. Reverence gradually grew into veneration, worship, adoration. Although the more rigid theology maintained a marked distinction between the honours shown to the martyrs and that addressed to the Redeemer and the Supreme Being, the line was too fine and invisible not to be transgressed by excited popular feeling. The Heathen writers constantly taunt the Christians with the substitution of the new idolatry for the old. The charge of worshipping dead men's bones and the remains of malefactors, constantly recurs. A Pagan philosopher, as late as the fourth century, contemptuously selects some barbarous names of African martyrs, and inquires whether they are more worthy objects of worship than Minerva or Jove (1).

The festivals in honour of the martyrs<sup>7</sup> were avowedly instituted, or at least conducted on a sumptuous scale, in rivalry of the banquets which formed so important and attractive a part of the Pagan ceremonial (2). Besides the earliest Agapæ, which gave place to the more solemn Eucharist, there were other kinds of banquets, at marriages and funerals, called likewise Agapæ (3); but those of the martyrs were the most costly and magnificent. The former were of a more private nature; the poor were entertained at the cost of the married couple or the relatives of the deceased. The relationship of the martyrs extended to the whole Christian community, and united all in one bond of piety. They belonged, by a new tie of spiritual kindred, to the whole Church.

By a noble metaphor, the day of the martyrs' death was considered that of their birth to immortality; and their birthdays became the most sacred and popular festivals of the Church (4). At their sepulchres (5), or more frequently, as the public worship became more costly, in stately churches erected either over their sepulchres, or in some more convenient situation, but dedicated to their honour, these holy days commenced with the most impressive reli-

(1) Quis enim ferat Jovi fulmina vibranti præferri Mygdonem; Junoni, Minervæ, Veneri, Vestæque Sanaem, et cunctis (pro nefas) Diis immortalibus archimartyrem Nymphanionem, inter quos Lucitas hævdi minore cultu suscipitur atque alii interminato numero; Diisque hominibusque odiosa nomina. See Augustin. Epist. xvi. p. 20.

(2) Cum factâ pace, turbæ Gentilium in Christianum nomen venire cupientes, hoc impedirentur, quod dies festos cum idolis suis solerent in abundantia epularum et ebrietate consumere, nec facile ab his perniciosissimis et tam vetustissimis voluptatibus se possent abstinere, visum fuisse majoribus nostris, ut huic infirmitatis parti interim parceretur, diesque festos, post eos, quos relinquebant, alios in honorem sanctorum martyrum vel non simili sacrilegio, quamvis simili luxu celebrarentur. Augustin. Epist. xxix. p. 52.

(3) Gregory Nazianzen mentions the three kinds.

Οὐδ' ἱερὴν ἐπὶ δαῖτα γενέθλιον, ἢ θανόντος,  
ἢ τινὰ νυμφιδίην σὺν πλεονέσσι θεῶν.  
Carm. x.

(4) Γενέθλια. natalitia. This custom was as early as the time of Polycarp. The day of his martyrdom was celebrated by the Church of Antioch. Euseb. lib. iv. 15. Compare Suicer, in voce γενέθλιον. Tertullian instances the offerings for the dead, and the annual celebration of the birthdays of the martyrs, as of Apostolic tradition. Oblationes pro defunctis, in natalibus annuâ die facimus. De Coron. Mil. c. 2. Compare Exhortat. ad Cast. c. 11. In the treatise de Monogamiâ, he considers it among the sacred duties of a faithful widow, offert annuis diebus dormitionis ejus.

(5) At Antioch, the remains of St. Juvenitus and St. Maximinus were placed in a sumptuous tomb, and honoured with an annual festival. Theodoret, E. H. iii. 15.

gious service. Hymns were sung in their praise (much of the early Christian poetry was composed for these occasions); the history of their lives and martyrdoms was read (1) (the legends which grew up into so fertile a subject for Christian mythic fable); panegyric orations were delivered by the best preachers (2). The day closed with an open banquet, in which all the worshippers were invited to partake. The wealthy Heathens had been accustomed to propitiate the manes of their departed friends by these costly festivals; the banquet was almost an integral part of the Heathen religious ceremony. The custom passed into the Church; and with the Pagan feeling, the festival assumed a Pagan character of gaiety and joyous excitement, and even of luxury (3). In some places, the confluence of worshippers was so great that, as in the earlier and indeed the more modern religions of Asia, the neighbourhood of the more celebrated churches of the martyrs became marts for commerce, and fairs were established on those holidays (4).

As the evening drew in, the solemn and religious thoughts gave way to other emotions; the wine flowed freely, and the healths of the martyrs were pledged, not unfrequently, to complete inebriety. All the luxuries of the Roman banquet were imperceptibly introduced. Dances were admitted, pantomimic spectacles were exhibited (5), the festivals were prolonged till late in the evening, or to midnight, so that other criminal irregularities profaned, if not the sacred edifice, its immediate neighbourhood.

The bishops had for some time sanctioned these pious hilarities with their presence; they had freely partaken of the banquets; and their attendants were accused of plundering the remains of the feast, which ought to have been preserved for the use of the poor (6).

(1) The author of the Acts of Ignatius wrote them, in part that the day of his martyrdom might be duly honoured. Act. Martyr. Ign. apud Cotelierum, vol. ii. p. 161. Compare Acta St. Polycarpi.

(2) There is a law of Theodosius the Great against selling the bodies of martyrs. Cod. Theod. ix. 17. 7.

(3) Lipsius considered these Agapæ derived from the Silicernium of the ancients. Ad Tac. Ann. vi. 5. Quod illa parentalia superstitioni Gentilium essent similia. Such is the observation of Ambrose apud Augustin. Conf. vi. 2. Boldetti, a good Roman Catholic and most learned antiquarian, observes on this and other usages adopted from Paganism,—Fu anchè sentimento de' prelati di chiesa di condescendere con ciò alla debolezza de' convertiti dal Gentilismo, per istaccarli più soavemente dell' antichi superstizioni, non levando loro affetto ma bensì convertendo in buoni i loro divertimenti. Osservazioni, p. 46. Compare Marangoni's work "dei Cose Gentilesche."

(4) Already had the Montanist asceticism of Tertullian taken alarm at the abuse of the earlier festival, which had likewise degenerated from its pious use, and with his accustomed vehemence denounced the abuse of the Agapæ among the Catholics. Apud te Agape in saculis fervet, fides in culinis calet, spes in fer-

culis jacet. Sed major his est Agape, quia per hanc adolescentes tui cum sororibus dormiunt, appendices scilicet gula, lascivia atque luxuria est. De Jejun. c. xvii.

There are many paintings in the catacombs representing Agapæ. Raoul Rochette, Mém. des Inscript. p. 141. The author attributes to the Agapæ held in the cemeteries, many of the cups, glasses, etc. found in the catacombs.

(5) Bottiger, in his proslution on the four ages of the drama (Opera Lat. p. 336.), supposed, from a passage of St. Augustine, that there were scenic representations of the deaths of martyrs. Muller justly observes that the passage does not bear out this inference; and Augustine would scarcely have used such expressions unless of dances or mimes of less decent kind. Sanctum locum invaserat pestilentia et petulantia saltationis; per totam noctem cantabantur nefaria, et cantantibus saltabatur. August. in Natal. Cyprian. p. 311.

(6) See the poem of Greg. Naz. de Div. Vit. Gener. Jerome admits the gross evils which took place during these feasts, but ascribes them to the irregularities of a youthful people, which ought not to raise a prejudice against the religion, or even against the usage. The bishops were sometimes called *νεσφοβοροι*, feasters on the dead.



But the scandals which inevitably arose out of these paganised solemnities awoke the slumbering vigilance of the more serious prelates. The meetings were gradually suppressed : they are denounced, with the strongest condemnation of the luxury and license with which they were celebrated in the church of Antioch, by Gregory of Nazianzum (1) and by Chrysostom. They were authoritatively condemned by a canon of the Council of Laodicea (2). In the West, they were generally held in Rome, and in other Italian cities, to a later period. The authority of Ambrose had discountenanced, if not entirely abolished, them in his diocese of Milan (3). They prevailed to the latest time in the churches of Africa, where they were vigorously assailed by the eloquence of Augustine. The Bishop of Hippo appeals to the example of Italy and other parts of the West, in which they had never prevailed, and in which, wherever they had been known, they had been suppressed by common consent. But Africa did not surrender them without a struggle. The Manichean Faustus, in the ascetic spirit of his sect, taunts the orthodox with their idolatrous festivals. "You have but substituted your Agape for the sacrifices of the Heathen; in the place of their idols you have set up your martyrs, whom you worship with the same ceremonies as the Pagans their gods. You appease the manes of the dead with wine and with meat-offerings." The answer of Augustine indignantly repels the charge of idolatry, and takes refuge in the subtle distinction in the nature of the worship offered to the martyrs. "The reverence paid to martyrs is the same with that offered to holy men in this life, only offered more freely, because they have finally triumphed in their conflict. We adore God alone, we offer sacrifice to no martyr, or to the soul of any saint, or to any angel. \* \* Those who intoxicate themselves by the sepulchres of the martyrs are condemned by sound doctrine. It is a different thing to approve, and to tolerate till we can amend. The discipline of Christians is one thing, the sensuality of those who thus indulge in drunkenness and the infirmity of the weak is another (4)."

So completely, however, had they grown into the habits of the Christian community, that in many places they lingered on in obstinate resistance to the eloquence of the great teachers of Christianity. Even the Councils pronounced with hesitating and tardy severity the sentence of condemnation against these inveterate

(1) Carm. ccxviii., ccxix., and Oratio vi. Chrysostom, Hom. in S. M. Julian.

(2) Conc. Harduin. t. i. p. 786.

(3) Ambros. de Jejun. c. xvii. Augustin. Confessiones, vi. 2.; see likewise Augustin. Epist. xxii. p. 28.

(4) Cont. Faust. lib. xx. c. xxi. One of the poems of St. Paulinus of Nola describes the general concourse to these festivals, and the riots which arose out of them.

Et nunc ecce frequentes  
Per totam et vigiles extendunt gaudia noctem,  
Lætitiâ somnos, tenebras funeralibus arcent.  
Verum utinam sanis agerent hæc gaudia votis,  
Nec sua liminibus miscerent gaudia sanctis.  
\* \* ignoscenda tamen puto talia parvis  
Gaudia quæ ducant epulis, quia mentibus error  
Irrepat rudibus, nec tantæ conscia culpæ  
Simplicitas pietate cadit, male credula Sanctos  
Perfusis balante mero gaudere sepulchris.

Carmen ix. in St. Felicem Martyrem.



or district. On the accession of a new Emperor, processions always took place, which ended in the exhibition of games (1). The dedication of statues to the Emperors by different cities, great victories, and other important events, were always celebrated with games. The Christians obtained a law from Theodosius, that games should be prohibited on the Lord's day. The African bishops, in the fifth Council of Carthage, petitioned that this prohibition might be extended to all Christian holidays. They urged that many members of the corporate bodies were obliged officially to attend on these occasions, and prevented from fulfilling their religious duties. The law of Theodosius the Elder had inhibited the celebration of games on Sundays (2), one of the Younger Theodosius added at Christmas, the Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost, and directed that the theatres should be closed, not only to the Christians, but to the impious Jews and superstitious Pagans (3). But, notwithstanding this law, which must have been imperfectly carried into execution, the indignant preachers still denounce the rivalry of the games, which withdrew so many of their audience (4). The *Theoretica* or fund for the expenses of public shows and amusements, which existed not only in the two capitals, but in all the larger cities of the Empire, was first confiscated to the imperial treasury by Justinian; up to that time, the imperial policy had sanctioned and enforced this expenditure; and it is remarkable that this charge, which had been so long voluntarily borne by the ambition or the vanity of the higher orders, was first imposed as a direct tax on individuals by a Christian Emperor. By a law of Constantine, the Senate of Rome and of Constantinople were empowered to designate any person of a certain rank and fortune for the costly function of exhibiting games in these two great cities (5). These were in addition to the spectacles exhibited by the consuls. In the other cities, decemvirs were nominated to this office (6). The only exemptions were nonage, military or civil service, or a special indulgence from the Emperor. Men fled from their native cities to escape this onerous distinction. But if the charge was thrown on the treasury, the treasury could recover from the prætor or decemvir, besides assessing heavy fines for the neglect of the duty; and they were liable to be condemned to serve two years instead of one. In the Eastern provinces, this office had been joined with a kind of high-priesthood, such were

The Theo-  
retica.

(1) The Constantinian Calendar (*Grævii The-saur.* viii.) reckons ninety-six days for the games, of which but few were peculiar to Rome. Muller, ii. p. 49.

(2) Cod. Theod. xv. v. 2.

(3) Cod. Theod. xv. i. 5. l. 5. A. D. 425. Muller, p. 50.

(4) See, for the earlier period, Apostolic Constit. ii. 60, 61, 62.; Theophyl. ad Autolye. iii. p. 396.; for the latter, Chrysostom, *pæne passim*, Hom. contra Am.; Hom. in princip. Act. i. 58.; Hom. in Johann.

(5) Zosim. lib. ii. c. 38.

(6) See various laws of Constantius, regulating the office, the expenses, the fines imposed on the prætors, Cod. Theodos. vi. 3.; Laws i. 1—33. This shows the importance attached to the office. These *munerarii*, as well as the actors, were to do penance all their lives. Act. Conc. Illeb. can. 3. Compare Bingham, xvi. 4. 8. This same council condemned all who took the office of decemvir to a year's exclusion from the communion. Bingham, *ubi supra*.



the Asiarchs, the Syriarchs (1), the Bithyniarchs. The most distinguished men of the province had been proud of accepting the station of chief minister of the gods, at the expense of these sumptuous festivities. The office remained under the Christian Emperors (2), but had degenerated into a kind of purveyor for the public pleasures. A law of Theodosius enacted that this office should not be imposed on any one who refused to undertake it (3). Another law, from which however, the Asiarchs were excluded, attempted to regulate the expenditure between the mean parsimony of some, and the prodigality of others (4). Those who voluntarily undertook the office of exhibiting games were likewise exempted from this sumptuary law, for there were still some ambitious of this kind of popularity. They were proud of purchasing, at this enormous price, the honour of seeing their names displayed on tablets to the wondering multitude (5), and of being drawn in their chariots through the applauding city on the morning of the festival.

Throughout the empire, this passion prevailed in every city (6), and in all classes. From early morning to late in the evening, the theatres were crowded in every part (7). The artisan deserted his work, the merchant his shop, the slaves followed their masters, and were admitted into the vast circuit. Sometimes, when the precincts of the circus or amphitheatre were insufficient to contain the thronging multitudes, the adjacent hills were crowded with spectators, anxious to obtain a glimpse of the distant combatants, or to ascertain the colour of the victorious charioteer. The usages of the East and of the West differed as to the admission of women to these spectacles. In the East, they were excluded by the general sentiment from the theatres (8). Nature itself, observes St. Chrysostom, enforces this prohibition (9). It arose, not out of Christianity, but out of the manners of the East; it is alluded to not as a distinction, but as a general usage (10). Chrysostom laments that

(1) Malala, Chronograph. lib. xii. in art. Codex Theodos. vi. 3. 1.

(2) The *tribunus voluptatum* appears as a title on a Christian tomb. Bosio, Roma Sotteranea, p. 106. Compare the observations of Bosio.

(3) Cod. Theodos. xii. 1. 103. Compare the quotations from Libanius, in Godefroy's Commentary. There is a sumptuary law of Theodosius II. limiting the expenses: "Nec inconsulta plausorum insaniam curialium vires, fortunae civium, principalium domus, possessorum opes, reipublicæ robur evellant." The Atyarchs, Syriarchs, Asiarchs, and some others, are exempted from this Law. C. T. xv. 9. 2. In Italy, at a later period, the reign of Theodoric, the public games were provided by the liberality of the Gothic sovereign: *Beatitudo sit temporum lætitia populorum*. Cassiodorus, epist. i. 20. The Epistles of Theodoric's minister are full of provisions and regulations for the celebration of the various kinds of games. Lib. i. epist. 20. 27. 30. 31. 32. 33., iii. 51., iv. 37. Theodoric espoused the green faction; he supported the pantomime. There were still *tribuni voluptatum* at Rome,

vi. 6. Stipends were allowed to *scenici*, ix. 21.

(4) Symmachus, lib. x, epist. 28. 42. Compare Heyne, Opuscula, vi. p. 14.

(5) Basil, in Psal. 61. Prudent. Hamartigenia.

(6) Muller names the following cities, besides the four great capitals, Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, in which the games are alluded to by ancient authors, Gortyna, Nicomedia, Laodicea, Tyre, Berytus, Caesarea, Heliopolis, Gaza, Ascalon, Jerusalem, Berea, Corinth, Cirta Carthage, Syracuse, Catania, Milan, Aquileia, Ravenna, Mentz, Cologne, Treves, Arles, P. 53.

(7) Augustine, indeed, asserts, "per omnes ferè civitates cadunt theatra caverè turpitudinum, et publicæ professiones flagitiorum. De Cons. Evangelist. c. 51.

(8) There are one or two passages of the Fathers opposed to this opinion. Tatian says, τοῦς ὁπὸς δὲ μοιχεύειν ἐπὶ τῆς σκάνης σοφιστεύοντας αἱ θυγατέρες ὑμῶν καὶ οἱ παῖδες θεοποῦσι. c. 22. Clemens Alex. Strom. lib. iii.

(9) Chrys. Hom. 12. in Coloss. vol. ii. p. 417.

(10) Procop. de Bell. Pers. l. c. 42.

women, though they did not attend the games, were agitated by the factions of the circus (1). In the West, the greater freedom of the Roman women had long asserted and still maintained this privilege (2). It is well known that the vestal virgins had their seats of honour in the Roman spectacles, even those which might have been supposed most repulsive to feminine gentleness and delicacy, and the Christian preachers of the West remonstrate as strongly against the females as against the men, on account of their inextinguishable attachment to the public spectacles.

The more austere and ascetic Christian teachers condemned alike all these popular spectacles. From the avowed connection with Paganism, as to the time of their celebration (3), their connection with the worship of Pagan deities, according to the accredited notion that all these deities were dæmons permitted to delude mankind, the theatre was considered a kind of temple of the Evil Spirit (4). There were some, however, who openly vindicated these public exhibitions, and alleged the chariot of Elijah, the dancing of David, and the quotations of St. Paul from dramatic writers, as cases in point.

These public spectacles were of four kinds, independent of the common and more vulgar exhibitions, juggling, rope-dancing, and tumbling (5).

Four kinds  
of spec-  
tacles.

I. The old gymnastic games. The Olympic games survived in Greece till the invasion of Alaric (6). Antioch likewise celebrated this quinquennial festivity; youths of station and rank exhibited themselves as boxers and wrestlers. These games were also retained at Rome and in parts of Africa (7): it is uncertain whether they were introduced into Constantinople. The various passages of Chrysostom which allude to them probably were delivered in Antioch. Something of the old honour adhered to the wrestlers and performers in these games: they either were, or were supposed to be, of respectable station and unblemished character. The herald advanced into the midst of the arena and made his proclamation,

Gymnastic  
games.

(1) It was remarked as an extraordinary occurrence that, on the intelligence of the martyrdom of Gordius, matrons and virgins, forgetting their bashfulness, rushed to the theatre. Basil, vol. ii. p. 144. 147.

(2) Quæ pudica forsitan ad spectaculum matrona processerat, de spectaculo revertitur impudica. Ad Donat. Comparare Augustine, de Civ. Dei, ii. 4. Quid juvenes aut virgines faciant, cum hæc et fieri sine pudore, et spectari libenter ab omnibus cernunt, admoneantur, quid facere possent, inflammantur libidines, ac se quisque pro sexu in illis imaginibus præfigurat, corruptiores ad cubacula revertuntur. Lact. Div. Instit. xv. 6. 31.

(3) Dubium enim non est, quod lædunt Deum, utpote idolis consecrata. Colitur namque et honoratur Minerva in gymnasiis, Venus in theatris, Neptunus in circis, Mars in arenis, Mercurius in palastris. Salvian, lib. vi.

A fair collection of the denunciations of the Fathers against theatrical amusements may be found in Mamachi, de' Costumi de' Primitivi Cristiani, ii. p. 150. et seqq.

(4) See the book de Spect. attributed to St. Cyprian.

(5) Compare the references to Chrysostom's works on the rope dancers, jugglers, etc. in Montfaucon, Diatribe, p. 194.

(6) Liban. de Vocat. ad Festa Olympicæ.

Cuncta Palæmonis manus explorata coronis Adsit, et Eleo pubes laudata tonanti.

Claudian, de Fl. Mal. Cons. 288.

This, however, may be poetic reminiscence. These exhibitions are described as conducted with greater decency and order (probably because they awoke less passionate interest) than those of the circus or theatre.

(7) They were restored in Africa, by a law of Gratian, A. D. 376. Cod. Theod. xv. 7. 3.

“that any man should come forward who had any charge against any one of the men about to appear before them, as a thief, a slave, or of bad reputation (1).”

Tragedy  
and comedy.

II. Theatrical exhibitions, properly so called. The higher tragedy and comedy were still represented on the inauguration of the consuls at Rome. Claudian names actors of the sock and buskin, the performers of genuine comedy and tragedy, as exhibited on the occasion of the consulship of Mallius (2). During the triumph of the Christian Emperors Theodosius and Arcadius, the theatre of Pompey was filled by chosen actors from all parts of the world. Two actors in tragedy and comedy (3) are named as standing in the same relation to each other as the famous Æsopus and the comic Roscius. Prudentius speaks of the tragic mask as still in use; and it appears that females acted those parts in Terence which were formerly represented by men (4). The youthful mind of Augustine took delight in being agitated by the fictitious sorrows of the stage (5). Nor was this higher branch of the art extinct in the East: tragic and comic actors are named, with other histrionic performers, in the orations of Chrysostom (6), and there are allusions in Libanius to mythological tragic fables and to the comedies of Menander (7). But as these representations, after they had ceased to be integral parts of the Pagan worship, were less eagerly denounced by the Christian teachers (8), the comparatively slight and scanty notices in their writings, almost our only records of the manners of the time, by no means prove the infrequency of these representations; though it is probable, for other reasons, that the barbarous and degraded taste was more gratified by the mimes and pantomimes, the chariot races of the circus, and the wild-beasts in the amphitheatre (9). But tragedy and comedy, at this period, were probably maintained rather to display the magnificence of the consul or prætor, who prided himself on the variety of his entertainments, and were applauded, perhaps (10), by professors of rhetoric, and a few faithful admirers of antiquity, rather than by the people at large. Some have supposed that the tragedies written on religious subjects in the time of Julian were represented on the

(1) Compare Montfaucon's *Diatrise*, p. 194

(2) Qui pulpita socco  
Personat, aut alte graditur majore coturno,  
In Cons. Mall. 313.  
Pompeiana proscenia delectis actoribus personarent.  
Symmach. lib. x. ep. 29.

(3) Publius Pollio and Ambivivus. Symmach. epist. x. 2.

(4) Donatus in *Andriam*, act. iv. sc. 3.

(5) Confess. iii. 2.

(6) Chrysostom, Hom. 10. in *Coloss.* v. ii. p. 403; Hom. 6. in *Terra mot.* i. 780., i. p. 38. i. 731.

(7) Liban. vol. ii. p. 375.

(8) Lactantius inveighs with all the energy of the first ages against tragedy and comedy: —  
Tragicæ historiæ subjiciunt oculis patricidia et

incesta regum malorum, et cothurnata scelera demonstrant. *Comica* de stupris virginum et amicitii meretricum, et quo magis sunt eloquentes, eo magis persuadent, facilius inhiærent memoriæ versus numerosi et ornati. *Instit.* vi. 20.

(9) Augustine, however, draws a distinction between these two classes of theatric representations and the lower kind: — *Scenicorum tolerabiliora ludorum, comediæ scilicet et tragædiæ, hoc est fabulæ poetarum, agendæ in spectaculo multâ rerum turpitudine, sed nullâ saltem, sicut aliæ multæ, verborum obscenitate composiæ, quas etiam inter studia, quæ liberalia vocantur, pueri legere et discere coguntur a senibus.* De Civ. Dei, lib. ii. c. 8.

(10) Muller, p. 139.



stage; but there is no ground for this notion; these were intended as school books, to supply the place of Sophocles and Menander.

In its degeneracy, the higher Drama had long been supplanted by,—1st, the Mimes. Even this kind of drama, perhaps, of Roman, or even of earlier Italian origin, had degenerated into the coarsest scurrility, and, it should seem, the most repulsive indecency. Formerly it had been the representation of some incident in common life, extemporaneously dramatised by the mime, ludicrous in its general character, mingled at times with sharp or even grave and sententious satire. Such were the mimes of Laberius, to which republican Rome had listened with delight. It was now the lowest kind of buffoonery. The mime, or several mimes, both male and female, appeared in ridiculous dresses, with shaven crowns, and pretending still to represent some kind of story, poured forth their witless obscenity, and indulged in all kinds of practical jokes and manual wit, blows on the face and broken heads. The music was probably the great charm, but that had become soft, effeminate, and lascivious. The female performers were of the most abandoned character (1), and scenes were sometimes exhibited of the most abominable indecency, even if we do not give implicit credit to the malignant tales of Procopius concerning the exhibitions of the Empress Theodora, when she performed as a dancing girl in these disgusting mimes (2).

Mimes.

The Pantomime was a kind of ballet in action (3). It was the mimic representation of all the old tragic and mythological fables, without words (4), or intermingled with chaunts or songs (5). These exhibitions were got up at times with great splendour of scenery, which was usually painted on hanging curtains, and with musical accompaniments of the greatest variety. The whole cycle of mythology (6), both of the gods and heroes, was represented by the dress and mimic gestures of the performer. The deities, both male and female,—Jupiter, Pluto, and Mars; Juno, Proserpine, Venus; Theseus and Hercules; Achilles, with all the heroes of the Trojan war; Phædra, Briseis, Atalanta, the race of OEdipus; these

Pantomimes.

(1) Many passages of Chrysostom might be quoted, in which he speaks of the naked courtesans, meaning probably with the most transparent clothing (though women were exhibited at Antioch swimming in an actual state of nudity), who performed in these mimes. The more severe Christian preacher is confirmed by the language of the Heathen Zosimus, whose bitter hatred to Christianity induces him to attribute their most monstrous excesses to the reign of the Christian Emperor. *Μίμοί τε γὰρ γυμναῖον, καὶ οἱ κακῶς ἀπολούμενοι ὀρχησται, καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι πρὸς αἰσχρότητα καὶ τὴν ἀτοπὴν ταύτην καὶ ἐκμελῇ συντελεῖ μουσικῇν, ἡσκήθη τε ἐπὶ τούτου.* lib. iv. c. 33.

(2) Muller, 92. 103.

(3) Libanius is indignant that men should at-

tempt to confound the orchestæ or pantomimes with these degraded and infamous mimes. Vol. iii. p. 350. The pantomimes wore masks, the mimes had their faces uncovered, and usually had shaven crowns.

(4) The pantomimi or dancers represented their parts,—

Clausis faucibus et loquente gestu  
Natu, crure, genu, manu, rotatu.

Sid. Apoll.

(5) There was sometimes a regular chorus, with instrumental music. Sid. Apoll. xxiii. 268., and probably poetry composed for the occasion. Muller, p. 122.

(6) Greg. Nyssen. in Galland. Bibliothec. Patrum, vi. p. 610. Ambrose, in Hexaem. iii. 1. 5. Synes. de Prov. ii. p. 128. ed. Petav. Symmach. i. ep. 89.

are but a few of the dramatic personages which, on the authority of Libanius (1), were personated by the pantomimes of the East. Sidonius Apollinaris (2) fills twenty-five lines with those represented in the West by the celebrated dancers Caramalus and Phabalon (3). These included the old fables of Medea and Jason, of the house of Thyestes, of Tereus and Philomela, Jupiter and Europa, and Danae, and Leda, and Ganymede, Mars and Venus, Perseus and Andromeda. In the West, the female parts here exhibited were likewise represented by women (4) of whom there were no less than 3000 in Rome (5): and so important were these females considered to the public amusement, that, on the expulsion of all strangers from the city during a famine, an exception was made by the prætor, in deference to the popular wishes, in favour of this class alone. The profession, however, was considered infamous, and the indecency of their attire upon the public stage justified the low estimate of their moral character. Their attractions were so dangerous to the Roman youth, that a special law prohibited the abduction of these females from their public occupation, whether the enamoured lover withdrew one of them from the stage as a mistress, or, as not unfrequently happened, with the more honourable title of wife (6). The East, though it sometimes endured the appearance of women in those parts, often left them to be performed by boys, yet with any thing but advantage to general morality. The aversion of Christianity to the subjects exhibited by the pantomimes, almost invariably moulded up as they were with Paganism, as well as its high moral sense (united, perhaps, with something of the disdain of ancient Rome for the histrionic art, which it patronised nevertheless with inexhaustible ardour), branded the performers with the deepest mark of public contempt. They were, as it were, public slaves, and could not abandon their profession (7). They were considered unfit to mingle with respectable society; might not appear in the forum or basilica, or use the public baths; they were excluded even from the theatre as spectators, and might not be attended by a slave, with a folding-stool for their use. Even Christianity appeared to extend its mercies and its hopes to this devoted race with some degree of rigour and jealousy. The actor baptized in the apparent agony of death, if he should recover, could not be forced back upon the stage; but the guardian of the public amusements was to take care, lest, by pretended sickness, the actor should obtain this precious privilege of baptism, and thus exemption from his servitude. Even the daugh-

(1) Liban. pro Salt. v. iii. 391.

(2) Sidon. Apoll. carm. xxiii. v. 267. 299.

(3) Claudian mentions a youth, who, before the pit, which thundered with applause,—

*Aut rigidam Niobem aut flentem Troada fingit.*

(4) Even in Constantinople, women acted in the pantomimes. Chrysostom, Hom. 6., in Thes-

salon., denounces the performance of Phædra and Hippolitus, by women: — Ὁ τριπρὶ τῶμα-  
τις τυπῶ φαινομένης.

(5) Ammian. Marcell., xiv. 6.

(6) Cod. Theodos. xv. 7. 5.

(7) Cod. Theodos. xv. 13.

ters of actresses partook of their mothers' infamy, and could only escape being doomed to their course of life by the profession of Christianity, ratified by a certain term of probationary virtue. If the actress relapsed from Christianity, she was invariably condemned to her impure servitude (1).

Such was the general state of the theatrical exhibitions in the Roman empire at that period. The higher drama, like every other intellectual and inventive art, had to undergo the influence of Christianity before it could revive in its splendid and prolific energy. In all European countries, the Christian mystery, as it was called, has been the parent of tragedy, perhaps of comedy. It reappeared as a purely religious representation, having retained no remembrance whatever of Paganism; and was at one period, perhaps, the most effective teacher, in times of general ignorance and total scarcity of books, both among priests and people, of Christian history as well as of Christian legend.

But at a later period, the old hereditary hostility of Christianity to the theatre has constantly revived. The passages of the Fathers have perpetually been repeated by the more severe preachers, whether fairly applicable or not to the dramatic entertainments of different periods; and in general it has had the effect of keeping the actor in a lower caste of society; a prejudice often productive of the evil which it professed to correct; for men whom the general sentiment considers of a low moral order will rarely make the vain attempt of raising themselves above it: if they cannot avoid contempt, they will care little whether they deserve it.

III. The Amphitheatre, with its shows of gladiators and wild-beasts. The suppression of those bloody spectacles, in which human beings slaughtered each other by hundreds for the diversion of their fellow men, is one of the most unquestionable and proudest triumphs of Christianity. The gladiatorial shows, strictly speaking, that is, the mortal combats of men, were never introduced into the less warlike East, though the combats of men with wild-beasts were exhibited in Syria and other parts. They were Roman in their origin, and to their termination. It might seem that the pride of Roman conquest was not satisfied with the execution of her desolating mandates, unless the whole city witnessed the bloodshed of her foreign captives; and in her decline she seemed to console herself with these sanguinary proofs of her still extensive empire: the ferocity survived the valour of her martial spirit. Barbarian life seemed, indeed, to be of no account, but to contribute to the sports of the Roman. The humane Symmachus, even at this late period (2), reproves the *impiety* of some Saxon captives, who,

Amphi-  
theatre.  
Gladiato-  
rial shows.

(1) Cod. Theodos. de Scenicis, xv. 7. 2. 4.  
8. 9.

novem fractas sine laqueo fauces primus ludī  
gladiatorii dies viderit. Symmach. lib. ii.  
epist. 46.

(2) Quando prohibuisset privata custodia  
desperatæ gentis impias manus, cum viginti



by strangling themselves in prison, escaped the ignominy of this public exhibition (1). It is an humiliating consideration to find how little Roman civilisation had tended to mitigate the ferocity of manners and of temperament. Not merely did women crowd the amphitheatre during the combats of these fierce and almost naked savages or criminals, but it was the especial privilege of the vestal virgin, even at this late period, to give the signal for the mortal blow, to watch the sword driven deeper into the palpitating entrails (2). The state of uncontrolled frenzy worked up even the most sober spectators. The manner in which this contagious passion for bloodshed engrossed the whole soul is described with singular power and truth by St. Augustine. A Christian student of the law was compelled by the importunity of his friends to enter the amphitheatre. He sat with his eyes closed, and his mind totally abstracted from the scene. He was suddenly startled from his trance by a tremendous shout from the whole audience. He opened his eyes, he could not but gaze on the spectacle. Directly he beheld the blood, his heart imbibed the common ferocity; he could not turn away; his eyes were riveted on the arena; and the interest, the excitement, the pleasure, grew into complete intoxication. He looked on, he shouted, he was inflamed; he carried away from the amphitheatre an irresistible propensity to return to its cruel enjoyments (3).

Christianity began to assail this deep-rooted passion of the Roman world with caution, almost with timidity. Christian Constantinople was never defiled with the blood of gladiators. In the same year as that of the Council of Nice, a local edict was issued, declaring the Emperor's disapprobation of these sanguinary exhibitions in time of peace, and prohibiting the volunteering of men as gladiators (4). This was a considerable step, if we call to mind the careless apathy with which Constantine, before his conversion, had exhibited all his barbarian captives in the amphitheatre at Treves (5). This edict, however, addressed to the prefect of Phœnicia, had no permanent effect, for Libanius, several years after, boasts that he had not been a spectator of the gladiatorial shows still regularly celebrated in Syria. Constantius prohibited soldiers, and those in the imperial service (Palatini), from hiring themselves out to the Lanistæ, the keepers of gladiators (6). Valentinian decreed that no Christian or Palatine should be condemned for any crime whatsoever to the arena (7). An early edict of Honorius prohibited any

(1) It is curious that at one time the exposure to wild beasts was considered a more ignominious punishment than fighting as a gladiator. The slave was condemned to the former for kidnapping; the freeman to the latter. Codex Theod. iv. 18. 1.

(2) Virgo—consurgit ad ictus,  
Et quotiens victor ferrum jugulo inserit, illa  
Delicias ait esse suas, pectusque jacentis  
Virgo modesta jubet, converso pollice, rumpi;

Ni lateat pars ulla animæ vitalibus imis,  
Altius impresso dum palpitat ense secutor.  
Prudent. adv. Sym. ii. 1095.

(3) August. Conf. vi. 8.

(4) Codex Theodos. xv. 12. 1.

(5) See p. 28.

(6) Codex Theodos. xv. 12. 2.

(7) Ibid. ix. 40. 8.

slave who had been a gladiator (1) from being admitted into the service of a man of senatorial dignity. But Christianity now began to speak in a more courageous and commanding tone (2). The Christian poet urges on the Christian Emperor the direct prohibition of these inhuman and disgraceful exhibitions (3) : but a single act often affects the public mind much more strongly than even the most eloquent and reiterated exhortation. An Eastern monk, named Telemachus, travelled all the way to Rome, in order to protest against those disgraceful barbarities. In his noble enthusiasm, he leaped into the arena to separate the combatants ; either with the sanction of the prefect, or that of the infuriated assembly, he was torn to pieces, the martyr of Christian humanity (4). The impression of this awful scene, of a Christian, a monk, thus murdered in the arena, was so profound, that Honorius issued a prohibitory edict, putting an end to these bloody shows. This edict, however, only suppressed the mortal combats of men (5) ; the less inhuman, though still brutalising, conflicts of men with wild-beasts seems scarcely to have been abolished (6) till the diminution of wealth, and the gradual contraction of the limits of the empire, cut off both the supply and the means of purchasing these costly luxuries. The revolted or conquered provinces of the South, the East, and the North, no longer rendered up their accustomed tribute of lions from Libya, leopards from the East, dogs of remarkable ferocity from Scotland, of crocodiles and bears, and every kind of wild and rare animal. The Emperor Anthemius prohibited the lamentable spectacles of wild-beasts on the Sunday ; and Salvian still inveighs against those bloody exhibitions. And this amusement gradually degenerated, if the word may be used, not so much from the improving humanity, as from the pusillanimity of the people. Arts were introduced to irritate the fury of the beast, without endangering the person of the combatant, which would have been contemptuously exploded in the more warlike days of the Empire. It became a mere exhibition of skill and agility. The beasts were sometimes tamed before they were exhibited. In the West, those games seem to have sunk with the Western empire (7) ; in

(1) Codex. Theodos., ix. 40. 8.

(2) Ibid. xv. 12. 3.

(3) *Arripe dilatam tua, dux, in tempora famam,  
Quodque patri superest, successor laudis habeto.  
Ille urbem vetuit taurorum sanguine tingi.  
Tu mortes miserorum hominum prohibete litari :  
Nullus in urbe cadat, cuius sit pena voluptas,  
Nec sua virginitas oblectet cœdibus ora.  
Jam solis contenta feris infans arena,  
Nulla cruentatis homicidia ludat in armis.*  
Prudent. adv. Sym. ii. 1121.

(4) Theodoret, v. 26.

(5) The law of Honorius is not extant in the Theodosian code, which only retains those of Constantine and Constantius. For this reason, doubts have been thrown on the authority of Theodoret ; but there is no recorded instance of gladiatorial combats between man and man since this period. The passage of Salvian, sometimes

alleged, refers to combats with wild-beasts — *Ubi summum deliciarum genus est mori homines, aut quod est mori gravius acerbiusque, lacerari, expleri ferarum alvos humanis carnibus, comedi homines cum circumstantium letitiâ, conspiciendum voluptate.* De Gub. Dei, lib. vi. p. 51.

(6) *Quicquid monstriferis nutrit Gætulia campis,  
Alpina quicquid tegitur nive, Gallica quicquid  
Silva timet, jaceat. Largo ditiescat arena  
Sanguine, consumant totos spectacula montes.*

Claud. in Cons. Mall. 306.

(7) Agincourt, Histoire de l'Art, is of opinion that Theodoric substituted military games for theatrical shows, and that these military games were the origin of the tournaments. The wild beast shows were still celebrated at Rome. Cassiod. Epist. v. 42.

the East, they lingered on so as to require a special prohibition by the Council of Trulla at Constantinople, at the close of the seventh century.

The cir-  
cus.  
Chariot  
races.

IV. The chariot race of the circus. If these former exhibitions were prejudicial to the modesty and humanity of the Roman people, the chariot races were no less fatal to their peace. This frenzy did not, indeed, reach its height till the middle of the fifth century, when the animosities of political and religious difference were outdone by factions enlisted in favour of the rival charioteers in the circus. As complete a separation took place in society; adverse parties were banded against each other in as fierce opposition; an insurrection as destructive and sanguinary took place; the throne of the Emperor was as fearfully shaken, in the collision of the blue and green factions, as ever took place in defence of the sacred rights of liberty or of faith. Constantinople seemed to concentrate on the circus all that absorbing interest, which at Rome was divided by many spectacles. The Christian city seemed to compensate itself for the excitement of those games which were prohibited by the religion, by the fury with which it embraced those which were allowed, or rather against which Christianity remonstrated in vain. Her milder tone of persuasiveness, and her more authoritative interdiction, were equally disregarded, where the sovereign and the whole people yielded to the common frenzy. But this consolation remained to Christianity, that when it was accused of distracting the imperial city with religious dissension, it might allege, that this at least was a nobler subject of difference; or rather, that the passions of men seized upon religious distinctions with no greater eagerness than they did on these competitions for the success of a chariot driver, in a blue or a green jacket, in order to gratify their inextinguishable love of strife and animosity.

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## CHAPTER III.

### CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

CHRISTIANITY was extensively propagated in an age in which Greek and Latin literature had fallen into hopeless degeneracy; nor could even its spirit awaken the dead. Both these languages had already attained and passed their full development; they had fulfilled their part in the imaginative and intellectual advancement of mankind; and it seems, in general, as much beyond the power of the genius of a country, as of an individual, to renew its youth. It was not till it had created new languages, or rather till languages



had been formed in which the religious notions of Christianity were an elementary and constituent part, that Christian literature assumed its free and natural dignity.

The genius of the new religion never coalesced in perfect and amicable harmony with either the Greek or the Latin tongue. In each case it was a foreign dialect introduced into a full-formed and completely organised language. The Greek, notwithstanding its exquisite pliancy, with difficulty accommodated itself to the new sentiments and opinions. It had either to endure the naturalisation of new words, or to deflect its own terms to new significations. In the latter case, the doctrines were endangered, in the former, the purity of language, more especially since the Oriental writers were in general alien to the Grecian mind. The Greek language had indeed long before yielded to the contaminating influences of Barbarism. From Homer to Demosthenes, it had varied in its style and character, but had maintained its admirable perfection, as the finest, the clearest, and most versatile instrument of poetry, oratory, or philosophy. But the conquests of Greece were as fatal to her language as to her liberties. The Macedonian, the language of the conquerors, was not the purest Greek (1), and in general, by the extension over a wider surface, the stream contracted a taint from every soil over which it flowed. Alexandria was probably the best school of foreign Grecian style, at least in literature; in Syria it had always been infected in some degree by the admixture of Oriental terms. The Hellenistic style, as it has been called, of the New Testament, may be considered a fair example of the language, as it was spoken in the provinces among persons of no high degree of intellectual culture.

Degeneracy.  
Fate of  
Greek literature  
and language.

The Latin seemed no less to have fulfilled its mission, and to have passed its culminating point, in the verse of Virgil and the prose of Cicero. Its stern and masculine majesty, its plain and practical vigour, seemed as if it could not outlive the republican institutions, in the intellectual conflicts of which it had been formed. The impulse of the old freedom carried it through the reign of Augustus, but no further; and it had undergone rapid and progressive deterioration before it was called upon to discharge its second office of disseminating and preserving the Christianity of the West; and the Latin, like the Greek, had suffered by its own triumphs. Among the more distinguished Heathen writers, subsequent to Augustus, the largest number were of provincial origin; and something of their foreign tone still adhered to their style. Of the best Latin Christian writers, it is remarkable that not one was a Roman, not one, except Ambrose, an Italian. Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius (perhaps Lactantius), and Augustine were Africans; the Roman

Of Romans.

(1) Compare the dissertation of Sturz on the Macedonian dialect, reprinted in the prolegomena to Valpy's edition of Stephens' Thesaurus.

education, and superior understanding of the latter, could not altogether refine away that rude provincialism which darkened the whole language of the former. The writings of Hilary are obscured by another dialect of Barbarism. Even at so late a period, whatever exceptions may be made to the taste of his conceptions and of his imagery, with some limitation, the *Roman* style of Claudian, and the structure of his verse, carries us back to the time of Virgil; in Prudentius, it is not merely the inferiority of the poet, but something foreign and uncongenial refuses to harmonise with the adopted poetic language (1).

Yet it was impossible that such an enthusiasm could be disseminated through the empire without in some degree awakening the torpid languages. The mind could not be so deeply stirred without expressing itself with life and vigour, even if with diminished elegance and dignity. No one can compare the energetic sentences of Chrysostom with the prolix and elaborate, if more correct, periods of Libanius, without acknowledging that a new principle of vitality has been infused into the language.

But in fact the ecclesiastical Greek and Latin are new dialects of the ancient tongue. Their literature stands entirely apart from that of Greece or Rome. The Greek already possessed the foundation of this literature in the Septuagint version of the Old, and in the original of the New Testament. The Vulgate of Jerome, which almost immediately superseded the older imperfect or inaccurate versions from the Greek, supplied the same groundwork to Latin Christendom. There is something singularly rich and, if we may so speak, picturesque in the Latin of the Vulgate; the Orientalism of the Scripture is blended up with such curious felicity with the idiom of the Latin, that, although far removed either from the colloquial language of the comedians, or the purity of Cicero, it both delights the ear and fills the mind. It is an original and somewhat foreign, but likewise an expressive and harmonious dialect (2). It has no doubt powerfully influenced the religious style, not merely of the later Latin writers, but those of the modern languages of which Latin is the parent. Constantly quoted, either in its express words, or in terms approaching closely to its own, it contributed to form the dialect of ecclesiastical Latin, which became the religious language of Europe; and as soon as religion condescended to employ the modern languages in its service, was transfused as

(1) Among the most remarkable productions as to Latinity are the Ecclesiastical History and Life of St. Martin of Tours by Sulpicius Severus; the legendary matter of which contrasts singularly with the perspicuous and almost classical elegance of the style. See post, on Minucius Felix.

(2) There appears to me more of the Oriental character in the Old Testament of the Vulgate than in the LXX. That translation having been

made by Greeks, or by Jews domiciled in a Greek city, the Hebrew style seems subdued, as far as possible, to the Greek. Jerome seems to have endeavoured to Hebraise or Orientalise his Latin.

The story of Jerome's nocturnal flagellation for his attachment to profane literature rests (as we have seen) on his own authority; but his later works show that the offending spirit was not effectively scourged out of him.

a necessary and integral part of that which related to religion. Christian literature was as yet purely religious in its scope; though it ranged over the whole field of ancient poetry, philosophy, and history, its sole object was the illustration or confirmation of Christian opinion.

For many ages, and indeed as long as it spoke the ancient languages, it was barren of poetry in all its loftier departments, at least of that which was poetry in form as well as in spirit. Poetry.

The religion itself was the *poetry* of Christianity. The sacred books were to the Christians what the national epic, and the sacred lyric had been to the other races of antiquity. They occupied the place, and proscribed in their superior sanctity, or defied by their unattainable excellence, all rivalry. The Church succeeded to the splendid inheritance of the Hebrew temple and synagogue. The Psalms and the Prophets, if they departed somewhat from their original simple energy and grandeur in the uncongenial and too polished languages of the Greeks and Romans, still, in their imagery, their bold impersonations, the power and majesty of their manner, as well as in the sublimity of the notions of divine power and wisdom, with which they were instinct, stood alone in the religious poetry of mankind.

The religious books of Christianity, though of a gentler cast, and only in a few short passages (and in the grand poetic drama of the Revelations) poetical in their form, had much, especially in their narratives, of the essence of poetry; the power of awakening kindred emotions; the pure simplicity of truth, blended with imagery and with language, which kindled the fancy. Faith itself was constantly summoning the imagination to its aid, to realise, to impersonate those scenes which were described in the sacred volume, and which it was thus enabled to embrace with greater fervour and sincerity. All the other early Christian poetry was pale and lifeless in comparison with that of the sacred writers. Sacred writings. Some few hymns, as the noble *Te Deum* ascribed to Ambrose, were admitted, with the Psalms, and the short lyric passages in the New Testament, the Magnificat, the *Nunc Dimittis*, and the *Alleluia*, into the services of the Church. But the sacred volume commanded exclusive adoration not merely by its sanctity, but by its unrivalled imagery and sweetness. Each sect had its hymns; and those of the Gnostics with the rival strains of the orthodox churches of Syria, attained great popularity. But in general these compositions were only a feebler echo of the strong and vivid sounds of the Hebrew psalms. The epic and tragic form into which, in the time of Julian, the scripture narratives were cast, in order to provide a Christian Homer and Euripides for those schools in which the originals were interdicted, were probably but cold paraphrases, the Hebrew poetry expressed in an incongruous cento of the Homeric or tragic phra-



seology. The garrulous feebleness of Gregory's own poem does not awaken any regret for the loss of those writings either of his own composition or of his age (1). Even in the martyrdoms the noblest unoccupied subjects for Christian verse, the poetry seems to have forced its way into the legend, rather than animated the writer of verse. Prudentius—whose finest lines (and they are sometimes of a very spirited, sententious, and eloquent, if not poetic cast) occur in his other poems, on these which would appear at first far more promising subjects is sometimes pretty and fanciful, but scarcely more (2).

(1) The Greek poetry after Nazianzen was almost silent; some, perhaps, of the hymns are ancient (one particularly in Routh's *Reliquiæ*). See likewise Smith's account of the Greek church. The hymns of Synesius are very interesting as illustrative of the state of religious sentiment, and by no means without beauty. But may we call these dreamy Platonic raptures Christian poetry?

(2) One of the best, or rather perhaps *prettiest*, passages, is that which has been selected as a hymn for the Innocents' day:—

Salvete flores martyrum  
Quos lucis ipso in limine,  
Christi insecutor sustulit  
Cœu turbo nascentes rosas.  
Vos, prima Christi victimæ,  
Grex immolatorum tener,  
Aram ante ipsam simplices  
Palma et coronis luditis.

But these are only a few stanzas out of a long hymn on the Epiphany. The best verses in Prudentius are to be found in the books against Symmachus; but their highest praise is that, in their force and energy, they *approach* to Claudian. With regard to Claudian, I cannot refrain from repeating what I have stated in another place, as it is so closely connected with the subject of Christian poetry. M. Beugnot has pointed out one remarkable characteristic of Claudian's poetry and of the times—his extraordinary religious indifference. Here is a poet writing at the actual crisis of the complete triumph of the new religion, and the visible extinction of the old: if we may so speak, a strictly historical poet, whose works, excepting his mythological poem on the rape of Proserpine, are confined to temporary subjects, and to the politics of his own eventful times; yet, excepting in one or two small and indifferent pieces, manifestly written by a Christian, and interpolated among his poems, there is no allusion whatever to the great religious strife. No one would know the existence of Christianity at that period of the world by reading the works of Claudian. His panegyric and his satire preserve the same religious impartiality; award their most lavish praise or their bitterest invective on Christian or Pagan: he insults the fall of Eugenius, and glories in the victories of Theodosius. Under his child,—and Honorius never became more than a child,—Christianity continued to inflict wounds more and more deadly on expiring Paganism. Are the gods of Olympus agitated with apprehension at the birth of their new enemy? They are introduced as rejoicing at his appearance, and promising long years of glory. The whole prophetic choir of Paganism, all the oracles throughout the world, are summoned to predict the felicity of his reign. His birth is compared to that of Apollo, but the

narrow limits of an island must not confine the new deity—

Non littora nostro  
Sufficerent angusta Deo.

Augury, and divination, the shrines of Ammon and of Delphi, the Persian magi, the Etruscan seers, the Chaldean astrologers, the Sibyl herself, are described as still discharging their poetic functions, and celebrating the natal day of this Christian prince. They are noble lines, as well as curious illustrations of the times:—

Quæ tunc documenta futuri?  
Quæ voces avium? quanti per inane volatus  
Quis vatum discursus erat? Tibi corniger Ammon,  
Et dudum taciti rupes silentia Delphi.  
Te Persæ cœcinere Magi, te sensit Etruscus  
Augur, et inspectis Babylonius horruit astris:  
Chaldæi stupore scnes, Cumanaque rursus  
Intonnit rupes, rabidæ delubra Sibyllæ.

Note on Gibbon, v. 249.

But *Roman* poetry expired with Claudian. In the vast mass of the Christian Latin poetry of this period, independent of the perpetual faults against metre and taste, it is impossible not to acknowledge that the subject matter appears foreign and irreconcilable with the style of the verse. Christian images and sentiments, the frequent biblical phrases and expressions, are not yet naturalised; and it is almost impossible to select any passage of considerable length from the whole cycle, which can be offered as poetry. I except a few of the hymns, and even, as to the hymns (setting aside the *Te Deum*), paradoxical as it may sound, I cannot but think the later and more barbarous the best. There is nothing in my judgment to be compared with the monkish "*Dies iræ, Dies illa,*" or even the "*Stabat Mater.*"

I am inclined to select, as a favourable specimen of Latin poetry, the following almost unknown lines (they are not in the earlier editions of Dracontius). I have three reasons for my selection: 1. The real merit of the verses compared to most of the Christian poetry; 2. Their opposition to the prevailing tenet of celibacy, for which cause they are quoted by Theiner; 3. The interest which early poetry on this subject (Adam in Paradise) must possess to the countrymen of Milton.

Tunc oculos per cuncta jacit, miratur amœnum  
Sic florere locum, sic puros fontibus amnes,  
Quatuor undisonas stringenti gurgite ripas,  
Ire per arboreos saltus, camposque virentes  
Miratur; sed quid sit homo, quos factus ad usus  
Scire cupit simplex, et non habet, unde requirat;  
Quo merito sibi nec data sit possessio mundi,  
Et domus alma nemus per florea regna paratum:  
Ac procul expectat virides jumenta per agros;  
Et de se tacitus, quæ sint hæc cuncta, requirit.  
Et quare secum non sint hæc ipsa, volutat:  
Nam consorte carens, cum quo conferret, egredit.

There is more of the essence of poetry in the simpler and unadorned Acts of the Martyrs, more pathos, occasionally more grandeur, more touching incident and expression, and even, we may venture to say, happier invention than in the prolix and inanimate strains of the Christian poet. For the awakened imagination was not content with feasting in silence on its lawful nutriment, the poetry of the Bible; it demanded and received perpetual stimulants, which increased, instead of satisfying the appetite. That peculiar state of the human mind had now commenced, in which the imagination so far predominates over the other faculties, that truth cannot help arraying itself in the garb of fiction; credulity courts fiction, and fiction believes its own fables. That some of the Christian legends were deliberate forgeries can scarcely be questioned; the principle of pious fraud appeared to justify this mode of working on the popular mind; it was admitted and avowed. To deceive into Christianity was so valuable a service, as to hallow deceit itself. But the largest portion was probably the natural birth of that imaginative excitement which quickens its day-dreams and nightly visions into reality. The Christian lived in a supernatural world; the notion of the divine power, the perpetual interference of the Deity, the agency of the countless invisible beings which hovered over mankind, was so strongly impressed upon the belief, that every extraordinary, and almost every ordinary incident became a miracle, every inward emotion a suggestion either of a good or an evil spirit. A mythic period was thus gradually formed, in which reality melted into fable, and invention unconsciously trespassed on the province of history. This invention had very early let itself loose, in the spurious gospels, or accounts of the lives of the Saviour and his Apostles, which were chiefly, we conceive, composed among, or rather against, the sects which were less scrupulous in their veneration for the sacred books. Unless

Legend.

Spurious  
Gospels

Viderat Omnipotens, hæc illum corde moventem,  
Et miseratus ait : Demus adiutoria facto,  
Participem generis : tanquam si diceret auctor,  
*Non solum decet esse virum, consortia blanda*  
Noverit, uxor erit, quum sit tamen ille maritus,  
Conjugium se quisque vocet, dulcedo recurat  
Concordibus innocuis, et sit sibi pignus uterque  
Velle pares, et nolte pares, stans una voluntas,  
Par animi concors, paribus concurrere votis.  
Nec mora, jam venit alma quies, oculosque supinat  
Somnus, et in dulcem solvuntur membra soporem.  
Sed quum jure Deus, nullo prohibente valeret  
Demere particulam, de quo plus ipse pararat,  
Ne vi oblata daret juveni sua costa dolorem,  
Redderet et tristem subito, quem lædere nollet,  
Fur opifex vult esse suus; nam posset et illam  
Pulvere de simili principis formare puellam.  
Sed quo plenus amor toto de corde veniret,  
Noscere in uxore voluit sua membra maritum,  
Dividitur contexta cutis, subducitur una  
Sensim costa viro, sed mox reditura marito.  
Nam juvenis de parte brevi formatur adulta  
Virgo, decora, rudis, matura tumebant annis,  
Conjugii, sobolisque capax, quibus apta probatur.  
Et sine lacte pio crescit infantia pubes.

Excutitur somno juvenis, videt ipse puellam  
Ante oculos astare suos, pater, inde maritus.  
Non tamen ex costâ genitor, sed conjugis auctor

Somnus erat partus, conceptus semine nullo.  
Materiem sopita quies produxit amoris,  
Affectusque novos blandi genere sopores.  
Constitit ante oculos nullo velamine tecta,  
Corpore nuda simul niveo, quasi nympha profundi,  
Cæsaries intonsa comis, gena pulchra rubore,  
Omnia pulchra gerens, oculos, os, colla, manusque,  
Vel qualem possent digiti formare Tonantis.  
Nescia mens illis, fieri quæ causa fuisset;  
Tunc Deus et princeps ambos, conjunxit in unum  
Et remeant sua costa viro; sua membra recepit;  
Accipit et fœnus, quum non sit debitor ullus.  
His datur omnis humus, et quicquid jussa creavit,  
Aëris et pelagi fœtus, elementa duorum,  
Arbitrio commissa manent. His, crescite, dixit  
Omnipotens, replete solum de semine vestro,  
Sanguinis ingeniti natos nutritæ nepotes,  
Et de prole novos iterum copulate jugales.  
Et dum terra fretum, dum cælum sublevat æer,  
Dum solis micat axe jubar, dum luna tenebras  
Dissipat, et puro lucent mea sidera cælo;  
Sumere quicquid habent pomaria nostra licebit;  
Nam totum quod terra creat, quod positus et æer  
Protulit, addictum vestro sub jure manebit,  
Deliciæque fluent vobis, et honesta voluptas;  
Arboris unius tantum nescite saporem.

Dracontii Presbyt. Hispani Christ. seculi v  
sub Theodos. M. Carmina, à F. Arevalo. Romæ,  
1791. Carmen de Deo, lib. i. v. 348. 416

Antidocetic, it is difficult to imagine any serious object in fictions in general so fantastic and puerile (1). This example had been set by some, probably, of the foreign Jews, whose apocryphal books were as numerous and as wild as those of the Christian sectaries. The Jews had likewise anticipated them in the interpolation or fabrication of the Sibylline verses. The fourth book of Esdras, the Shepherd of Hermas, and other prophetic works, grew out of the Prophets and the book of Revelations, as the Gospels of Nicodemus, and that of the infancy, and the various spurious acts of the different Apostles (2), out of the Gospels and Acts. The Recognitions and other tracts which are called the Clementina, partake more of the nature of religious romance. Many of the former were obviously intended to pass for genuine records, and must be proscribed as unwarrantable fictions; the latter may rather have been designed to trace, and so to awaken religious feelings, than as altogether real history. The Lives of St. Anthony by Athanasius and of Hilarion by Jerome are the prototypes of the countless biographies of saints; and with a strong outline of truth, became impersonations of the feelings, the opinions, the belief of the time. We have no reason to doubt that the authors implicitly believed whatever of fiction embellishes their own unpremeditated fables; the colouring, though fanciful and inconceivable to our eyes, was fresh and living to theirs.

Lives of  
Saints.

History.

History itself could only reflect the proceedings of the Christian world, as they appeared to that world. We may lament that the annals of Christianity found in the earliest times no historian more judicious and trustworthy than Eusebius; the heretical sects no less prejudiced and more philosophical chronicler than Epiphanius: but in them, if not scrupulously veracious reporters of the events and characters of the times, we possess almost all that we could reasonably hope; faithful reporters of the opinions entertained, and the feelings excited by both. Few Christians of that day would not have considered it the sacred duty of a Christian to adopt that principle, avowed and gloried in by Eusebius, but now made a bitter reproach, that he would relate all that was to the credit, and pass lightly over all which was to the dishonour of the faith (3). The

(1) Compare what has been said on the Gospel of the Infancy, vol. i. page 72; though I would now observe that the antiquity of this gospel is very dubious.

(2) Compare the Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti, by J. A. Fabricius, and Jones on the Canon. A more elaborate collection of these curious documents has been commenced (I trust not abandoned) by Dr. Thilo, Lipsiæ, 1832. Of these, by far the most remarkable in its composition and its influence, was the Gospel of Nicodemus. The author of this work was a poet, and of no mean invention. The latter part, which describes the descent of the Saviour to hell, to deliver "the spirits in prison" (according to the hint in the epistle of St. Peter, 1 Peter, iii. 19),

is extremely striking and dramatic. This "harrowing of hell," as it is called in the old mysteries, became a favourite topic of Christian legend, founded on, and tending greatly to establish the popular belief in, a purgatory, and to open, as it were, to the fears of man, the terrors of the penal state. With regard to these spurious gospels in general, it is a curious question in what manner, so little noticed as they are in the higher Christian literature, they should have reached down, and so completely incorporated themselves, in the dark ages, with the superstitions of the vulgar. They would never have furnished so many subjects to painting, if they had not been objects of popular belief.

(3) "In addition to these things (the appoint-



historians of Christianity were credulous, but of that which it would have been considered impiety to disbelieve, even if they had the inclination.

The larger part of Christian literature consists in controversial writings, valuable to posterity as records of the progress of the human mind, and of the gradual development of Christian opinions; at times worthy of admiration for the force, the copiousness, and the subtlety of argument; but too often repulsive from their solemn prolixity on insignificant subjects, and above all, the fierce, the unjust, and the acrimonious spirit with which they treat their adversaries. The Christian literature in prose (excluding the history and hagiography), may be distributed under five heads: — I. Apologies, or defences of the Faith, against Jewish, or more frequently Heathen adversaries. II. Hermeneutics, or commentaries on the sacred writings. III. Expositions of the principles and doctrines of the Faith. IV. Polemical works against the different sects and heresies. V. Orations.

I. We have already traced the manner in which the apology for Christianity, from humbly defensive, became vigorously aggressive. The calm appeal to justice and humanity, the earnest deprecation of the odious calumnies with which they were charged, the plea for toleration, gradually rise to the vehement and uncompromising proscription of the folly and guilt of idolatry. Tertullian marks, as it were, the period of transition, though his fiery temper may perhaps have anticipated the time when Christianity, in the consciousness of strength, instead of endeavouring to appease or avert the wrath of hostile Paganism, might defy it to deadly strife. The earliest extant apology, that of Justin Martyr, is by no means severe in argument, nor vigorous in style, and though not altogether abstaining from recrimination, is still rather humble and deprecatory in its tone. The short apologetic orations—as the Christians

Apologies.

ment of rude and unfit persons to episcopal offices and other delinquencies), the ambition of many; the precipitate and illegitimate ordinations; the dissensions among the confessors; whatever the younger and more seditious so pertinaciously attempted against the remains of the Church, introducing innovation after innovation, and unsparingly, in the midst of the calamities of the persecution, adding new afflictions, and heaping evil upon evil; all these things I think it right to pass over, as unbefitting my history, which, as I stated in the beginning, declines and avoids the relations of such things. But whatsoever things according to the sacred Scripture, are 'honest and of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, these things I have thought it most befitting the history of these wonderful martyrs, to speak and to write and to address to the ears of the faithful.'" On this passage, de Martyr. Palest. cxii., and that to which it alludes, E. H. viii 2., the honesty and impartiality of Eusebius, which was not above suspicion in his own day (Tillemont,

M. E. tom. i. part i. p. 67), has been severely questioned. Gibbon's observations on the subject gave rise to many dissertations. Muller, de Fide Euseb. Cas. Havnia, 1813. Danzius, de Euseb. Cas. H. E. Scriptore, ejusque Fide Historica rectè æstimandâ, Jenæ, 1815. Kestner, Comment de Euseb. H. E. Conditoris Auctoritate et Fide. See also Reuterdahl, de Fontibus H. E. Eusebiana. Lond. Goth. 1826, and various passages in the Excursus of Heinichen. In many passages it is clear that Eusebius did not adhere to his own rule of partiality. His Ecclesiastical History, though probably highly coloured in many parts, is by no means an uniform panegyric on the early Christians. Strict impartiality could not be expected from a Christian writer of that day; and probably Eusebius erred more often from credulity than from dishonesty. Yet the unbelief produced, in later times, by the fictitious character of early Christian History, may show how dangerous, how fatal, may be the least departure from truth.

had to encounter not merely the general hostility of the government or the people, but direct and argumentative treatises, written against them by the philosophic party—gradually swelled into books. The first of these is perhaps the best, that of Origen against Celsus. The intellect of Origen, notwithstanding its occasional fantastic aberrations, appears to us more suited to grapple with this lofty argument than the diffuse and excursive Eusebius, whose *evangelic Preparation and Demonstration* heaped together vast masses of curious but by no means convincing learning, and the feeble and less candid Cyril, in his *Books against Julian*. We have already noticed the great work which perhaps might be best arranged under this head, the “*City of God*” of St. Augustine; but there was one short treatise which may vindicate the Christian Latin literature from the charge of barbarism: perhaps no late work, either Pagan or Christian, reminds us of the golden days of Latin prose so much as the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix.

Hermeneutics.

II. The Hermeneutics, or the interpretation of the sacred writers, might be expected to have more real value and authority than can be awarded them by sober and dispassionate judgment. But it cannot be denied that almost all these writers, including those of highest name, are fanciful in their inferences, discover mysteries in the plainest sentences, wander away from the clear historical, moral, or religious meaning, into a long train of corollaries, at which we arrive we know not how. Piety, in fact, read in the Scripture, whatever it chose to read, and the devotional feeling it excited was at once the end and the test of the biblical commentary. But the character of the age and the school in which the Christian teachers were trained, must here, as in other cases, be taken into account. The most sober Jewish system of interpretation (setting aside the wild cabalistic notions of the significance of letters, the frequency of their recurrence, their collocation, and all those wild theories which were engendered by a servile veneration of the very form and language of the sacred writings) allowed itself at least an equal latitude of authoritative inference. The Platonists spun out the thoughts or axioms of their master into as fine and subtle a web of mystic speculation. The general principle of an esoteric or recondite meaning in all works which commanded veneration, was universally received; it was this principle upon which the Gnostic sects formed all their vague and mystic theories; and if in this respect the Christian teachers did not bind themselves by much severer rules of reasoning than prevailed around them on all sides, they may have been actuated partly by some jealousy, lest their own plainer and simpler sacred writings should appear dry and barren, in comparison with the rich and imaginative freedom of their adversaries.

III. The expositions of faith and practice may comprehend all

the smaller treatises on particular duties; prayer, almsgiving, marriage, and celibacy. They depend, of course, for their merit and authority on the character of the writer.

Exposi-  
tions of  
Faith.

IV. Christianity might appear, if we judge by the proportion which the controversial writings bear to the rest of Christian literature, to have introduced an element of violent and implacable discord. Nor does the tone of these polemical writings, by which alone we can judge of the ancient heresies; of which their own accounts have almost entirely perished, impress us very favourably with their fairness or candour. But it must be remembered that, after all, the field of literature was not the arena in which the great contest between Christianity and the world was waged; it was in the private circle of each separate congregation, which was constantly but silently enlarging its boundaries; it was the immediate contact of mind with mind, the direct influence of the Christian clergy and even the more pious of the laity, which were tranquilly and noiselessly pursuing their course of conversion (1).

Polemical  
writings.

These treatises, however, were principally addressed to the clergy, and through them worked downward into the mass of the Christian people: even with the more rapid and frequent communication which took place in the Christian world, they were but partially and imperfectly disseminated; but that which became another considerable and important part of their literature, their oratory, had in the first instance been directly addressed to the popular mind, and formed the chief part of the popular instruction. Christian preaching had opened a new field for eloquence.

V. Oratory, that oratory at least which communicates its own impulses and passions to the heart, which not merely persuades the reason, but sways the whole soul of man, had suffered a long and total silence. It had every where expired with the republican institutions. The discussions in the senate had been controlled by the imperial presence; and even if the Roman senators had asserted the fullest freedom of speech, and allowed themselves the most exciting fervour of language, this was but one assembly in a single city, formed out of a confined aristocracy. The municipal assemblies were alike rebuked by the awe of a presiding master, the provincial governor, and of course afforded a less open field for stirring and general eloquence. The perfection of jurisprudence had probably been equally fatal to judicial oratory; we hear of great lawyers, but not of distinguished advocates. The highest flight of

Christian  
oratory.

(1) I might perhaps have made another and a very interesting branch of the prose Christian literature, the epistolary. The letters of the great writers form one of the most valuable parts of their works. The Latin Fathers, however, maintain that superiority over the Greek, which in classical times is ascribed by Cicero and Pliny. The letters of Cyprian and Ambrose are of the

highest interest as historical documents; those of Jerome, for manners; those of Augustine, perhaps for style. They far surpass those of Chrysostom, which we must, however, recollect were written from his dreary and monotonous place of exile. Yet Chrysostom's are superior to that duldest of all collections, the huge folio of the letters of Libanius.



Pagan oratory which remains is in the adulatory panegyrics of the Emperors, pronounced by rival candidates for favour. Rhetoric was taught, indeed, and practised as a liberal, but it had sunk into a mere art; it was taught by salaried professors in all the great towns to the higher youth; but they were mere exercises of fluent diction, on trite or obsolete subjects, the characters of the heroes of the *Iliad*, or some subtle question of morality (1). It is impossible to conceive a more sudden and total change than from the school of the rhetorician to a crowded Christian church. The orator suddenly emerged from a listless audience of brother scholars, before whom he had discussed some one of those trivial questions according to formal rules, and whose ear could require no more than terseness or elegance of diction, and a just distribution of the argument: emotion was neither expected nor could be excited. He found himself among a breathless and anxious multitude, whose eternal destiny might seem to hang on his lips, catching up and treasuring his words as those of divine inspiration, and interrupting his more eloquent passages by almost involuntary acclamations (2). The orator, in the best days of Athens, the tribune, in the most turbulent periods of Rome, had not such complete hold upon the minds of his hearers; and—but that the sublime nature of his subject usually lay above the sphere of immediate action, but that, the purer and loftier its tone, if it found instantaneous sympathy, yet it also met the constant inert resistance of prejudice, and ignorance, and vice to its authority,—the power with which this privilege of oratory would have invested the clergy would have been far greater than that of any of the former political or sacerdotal dominations. Wherever the oratory of the pulpit coincided with human passion, it was irresistible, and sometimes when it resolutely encountered it, it might extort an unwilling triumph: when it appealed to faction, to ferocity, to sectarian animosity, it swept away its audience like a torrent, to any violence or madness at which it aimed; when to virtue, to piety, to peace, it at times subdued the most refractory, and received the homage of devout obedience.

The bishop in general, at least when the hierarchical power became more dominant, reserved for himself an office so productive of influence and so liable to abuse (3). But men like Athanasius or

(1) The declamations of Quintilian are no doubt favourable specimens both of the subjects and the style of these orators.

(2) These acclamations sometimes rewarded the more eloquent and successful teachers of rhetoric. Themistius speaks of the ἐκβοήσεις τε καὶ κρότους, οἷον θαυμά ἀπολαύουσι παρ' ὑμῶν οἱ δαιμόνιοι σορισταί. *Basanistes*, p. 236., edit. Deindorf. Compare the note. Chrysostom's works are full of allusions to these acclamations.

(3) The laity were long permitted to address the people in the absence of the clergy. It was objected to the Bishop Demetrius, that he had permitted an unprecedented innovation in the case of Origen; he had allowed a layman to teach when the bishop was present. Euseb. E. H. vi. 19. Ὁ διδάσκων, εἰ καὶ λαϊκὸς ᾗ, ἔμπειρος δὲ τοῦ λόγου, καὶ τὸν τρόπον σεμνός, διδάσκειτω. *Constit. Apost. viii. 32.* Laicus, præsentibus clericis, nisi illis jubentibus, docere non audeat. *Conc. Carth. can. 98.* Jerome

Augustine were not compelled to wait for that qualification or rank. They received the ready permission of the bishop, to exercise at once this important function. In general, a promising orator would rarely want opportunity of distinction; and he who had obtained celebrity would frequently be raised by general acclamation, or by a just appreciation of his usefulness by the higher clergy, to an episcopal throne.

But it is difficult to conceive the general effect produced by this devotion of oratory to its new office. From this time, instead of seizing casual opportunities of working on the mind and heart of man, it was constantly, regularly, in every part of the empire, with more or less energy, with greater or less commanding authority, urging the doctrines of Christianity on awe-struck and submissive hearers. It had, of course, as it always has had, its periods of more than usual excitement, its sudden paroxysms of power, by which it convulsed some part of society. The constancy and regularity with which, in the ordinary course of things, it discharged its function, may in some degree have deadened its influence; and, in the period of ignorance and barbarism, the instruction was chiefly through the ceremonial, the symbolic worship, the painting, and even the dramatic representation.

Still, this new moral power, though intermitted at times, and even suspended, was almost continually operating, in its great and sustained energy, throughout the Christian world; though of course strongly tempered with the dominant spirit of Christianity, and, excepting in those periods either ripe for or preparing some great change in religious sentiment or opinion, the living and general expression of the prevalent Christianity, it was always in greater or less activity, instilling the broader principles of Christian faith and morals; if superstitious, rarely altogether silent; if appealing to passions which ought to have been rebuked before its voice, and exciting those feelings of hostility between conflicting sects which it should have allayed,—yet even then in some hearts its gentler and more Christian tones made a profound and salutary impression, while its more violent language fell off without mingling with the uncongenial feelings. The great principles of the religion,—the providence of God, the redemption by Christ, the immortality of the soul, future retribution,—gleamed through all the fantastic and legendary lore with which it was encumbered and obscured in the darker ages. Christianity first imposed it as a duty on one class

might be supposed, in his indignant remonstrance against the right which almost all assumed of interpreting the Scriptures, to be writing of later days. *Quod medicorum est, promittunt medici, tractant fabrilis fabri. Sola Scripturarum ars est, quam sibi omnes passim vindicant. Scribimus, iudoci doctique poemata passim. Hanc garrula anus, hanc delirus senex, hanc sophista verborum, hanc universi præsu-*

*munt, lacerant, doctent antequam discant. Alii ad dicto supercilio, grandia verba trutinantes, inter mulierculas de sacris literis philosophantur. Alii discunt, prohi pudor! à feminis, quod viros doceant: et ne parum hoc sit quadam facilitate verborum; imò audaciâ, edisserunt aliis quod ipsi non intelligunt* Epist. 1. ad Paulinum, vol. iv. p. 571

of men to be constantly enforcing moral and religious truth on all mankind. Though that duty, of course, was discharged with very different energy, judgment, and success, at different periods, it was always a strong counteracting power, an authorised, and in general respected, remonstrance against the vices and misery of mankind. Man was perpetually reminded that he was an immortal being under the protection of a wise and all-ruling Providence, and destined for a higher state of existence.

Nor was this influence only immediate and temporary : Christian oratory did not cease to speak when its echoes had died away upon the ear, and its expressions faded from the hearts of those to whom it was addressed. The orations of the Basils and Chrysostoms, the Ambroses and Augustines, became one of the most important parts of Christian literature. That eloquence which, in Rome and Greece, had been confined to civil and judicial affairs, was now inseparably connected with religion. The oratory of the pulpit took its place with that of the bar, the comitia, or the senate, as the historical record of that which once had powerfully moved the minds of multitudes. No part of Christian literature so vividly reflects the times, the tone of religious doctrine or sentiment, in many cases the manners, habits, and character of the period, as the sermons of the leading teachers.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CHRISTIANITY AND THE FINE ARTS.

*Fine arts.* As in literature, so in the fine arts, Christianity had to await that period in which it should become completely interwoven with the feelings and moral being of mankind, before it could put forth all its creative energies, and kindle into active productiveness those new principles of the noble and the beautiful, which it infused into the human imagination. The dawn of a new civilisation must be the first epoch for the development of Christian art. The total disorganisation of society, which was about to take place, implied the total suspension of the arts which embellish social life. The objects of admiration were swept away by the destructive ravages of Barbarian warfare; or, where they were left in contemptuous indifference, the mind had neither leisure to indulge, nor refinement enough to feel, this admiration, which belongs to a more secure state of society, and of repose from the more pressing toils and anxieties of life.

This suspended animation of the fine arts was of course different in degree in the various parts of Europe, in proportion as they



were exposed to the ravages of war, the comparative barbarism of the tribes by which they were overrun, the station held by the clergy, the security which they could command by the sanctity of their character, and their disposable wealth. At every period, from Theodoric, who dwelt with vain fondness over the last struggles of decaying art, to Charlemagne, who seemed to hail, with prophetic taste, the hope of its revival, there is no period in which the tradition of art was not preserved in some part of Europe, though obscured by ignorance, barbarism, and that still worse enemy, if possible, false and meretricious taste. Christianity, in every branch of the arts, preserved something from the general wreck, and brooded in silence over the imperfect rudiments of each, of which it was the sole conservator. The mere mechanical skill of working stone, of delineating the human face, and of laying on colours so as to produce something like illusion, was constantly exercised in the works which religion required to awaken the torpid emotions of an ignorant and superstitious people (1).

In all the arts, Christianity was at first, of course, purely imitative, and imitative of the prevalent degenerate style. It had not yet felt its strength, and dared not develope, or dreamed not of those latent principles which lay beneath its religion, and which hereafter were to produce works, in its own style, and its own department, rivalling all the wonders of antiquity ; when the extraordinary creations of its proper architecture were to arise, far surpassing in the skill of their construction, in their magnitude more than equalling them, and in their opposite indeed, but not less majestic style, vindicating the genius of Christianity : when Italy was to transcend ancient Greece in painting as much as the whole modern world is inferior in the rival art of sculpture.

I. Architecture was the first of these arts which was summoned to the service of Christianity. The devotion of the earlier ages did not need, and could not command, this subsidiary to pious emotion,—it imparted sanctity to the meanest building ; now it would not be content without enshrining its triumphant worship in a loftier edifice. Religion at once offered this proof of its sincerity by the sacrifice of wealth to this hallowed purpose ; and the increasing splendour of the religious edifices reacted upon the general devotion, by the feelings of awe and veneration which they inspired. Splendour, however, did not disdain to be subservient to use ; and the arrangement of the new buildings, which arose in all quarters, or were diverted to this new object, accommodated themselves to the Christian ceremonial. In the East, we have already shown, in the church of Tyre, described by Eusebius, the ancient temple lending its model to the Christian church ; and the basilica, in the

Architec-  
ture.

(1) The Iconoclasts had probably more influence in barbarising the East than the Barbarians themselves in the West.

West, adapted with still greater ease and propriety for Christian worship (1). There were many distinctive points which materially affected the style of Christian architecture. The simplicity of the Grecian temple, as it has been shown (2), harmonised perfectly only with its own form of worship; it was more of a public place, sometimes, indeed, hypæthral, or open to the air. The Christian worship demanded more complete enclosure; the church was more of a chamber, in which the voice of an individual could be distinctly heard; and the whole assembly of worshippers, sheltered from the change or inclemency of the weather, or the intrusion of unauthorised persons, might listen in undisturbed devotion to the prayer, the reading of the scripture; or the preacher.

**Windows.** One consequence of this was the necessity of regular apertures for the admission of light (3); and these imperatively demanded a departure from the plan of temple architecture.

Windows had been equally necessary in the basilicæ for the public legal proceedings; the reading legal documents required a bright and full light; and in the basilicæ the windows were numerous and large. The nave, probably from the earliest period, was lighted by cleristery windows, which were above the roof of the lower aisles (4).

Throughout the West, the practice of converting the basilica into the church continued to a late period; the very name seemed appropriate: the royal hall was changed into a dwelling for the **GREAT KING** (5).

**Subdivisions of the building.**

The more minute subdivision of the internal arrangement contributed to form the peculiar character of Christian architecture. The different orders of Christians were distributed according to their respective degrees of proficiency. But besides this, the church had inherited from the synagogue, and from the general feeling of the East, the principle of secluding the female part of the worshippers. Enclosed galleries, on a higher level, were probably common in the

(1) Vol. I. p. 398, 399.

(2) See p. 57, 59.

(3) In the fanciful comparison (in H. E. x. 4.) which Eusebius draws between the different parts of the church and the different gradations of catechumens, he speaks of the most perfect as "shone on by the light through the windows:"—*τοὺς δὲ πρὸς τὸ φῶς ἀνοίγματα καταυγάζει*. He seems to describe the temple as full of light, emblematical of the heavenly light diffused by Christ,—*λαμπρὸν καὶ φαιδρὸν ἔμπλεον τὰ τε ἑνδοθὲν καὶ τὰ ἔκτος*: but it is not easy to discover where his metaphor ends and his fact begins. See Ciampini, vol. i. p. 74.

(4) The size of the windows has been disputed by Christian antiquaries: some asserted that the early Christians, accustomed to the obscurity of their crypts and catacombs, preferred narrow apertures for light: others that the services, es-

pecially reading the Scriptures, required it to be both bright and equally diffused. Ciampini, as an Italian, prefers the latter, and sarcastically alludes to the narrow windows of Gothic architecture, introduced by the "Vandals," whose first object being to exclude the cold of their northern climate, they contracted the windows to the narrowest dimensions possible. In the monastic churches, the light was excluded, quia monachis meditantibus fortasse officiebat, quominus possent intento animo soli Deo vacare. Ciampini, *Vetera Monumenta*. The author considers that the parochial or cathedral churches may, in general, be distinguished from the monastic by this test.

(5) Basilicæ prius vocabantur regum habitacula, nunc autem ideo basilicæ divina templa nominantur, quia ibi Regi omnium Deo cultus et sacrificia offeruntur. Isidor. Orig. lib. v. Basilicæ olim negotiis pæne, nunc votis pro tuâ salute susceptis. Auson. Grat. Act. pro Consul.

synagogues ; and this arrangement appears to have been generally adopted in the earlier Christian Churches (1).

This greater internal complexity necessarily led to still farther departure from the simplicity of design in the exterior plan and elevation. The single or the double row of columns, reaching from the top to the bottom of the building, with the long and unbroken horizontal line of the roof reposing upon it, would give place to rows of unequal heights, or to the division into separate stories.

The same process had probably taken place in the palatial architecture of Rome. Instead of one order of columns, which reached from the top to the bottom of the buildings, rows of columns, one above the other, marked the different stories into which the building was divided.

Christianity thus, from the first, either at once assumed, or betrayed its tendency to, its peculiar character. Its harmony was not that of the Greek, arising from the breadth and simplicity of one design, which, if at times too vast for the eye to contemplate at a single glance, was comprehended and felt at once by the mind ; of which the lines were all horizontal and regular, and the general impression a majestic or graceful uniformity, either awful from its massiveness or solidity, or pleasing from its lightness and delicate proportion. The harmony of the Christian building ( if in fact it attained, before its perfection in the mediæval Gothic, to that first principle of architecture ) consisted in the combination of many separate parts, duly balanced into one whole ; the subordination of the accessories to the principal object ; the multiplication of distinct objects coalescing into one rich and effective mass, and pervaded and reduced to a kind of symmetry by one general character in the various lines and in the style of ornament.

This predominance of complexity over simplicity, of variety over symmetry, was no doubt greatly increased by the buildings which, from an early period, arose around the central church, especially in all the monastic institutions. The baptistry was often a separate building, and frequently, in the ordinary structures for worship, dwellings for the officiating priesthood were attached to, or adjacent to, the church. The Grecian temple appears often to have stood alone, on the brow of a hill, in a grove, or in some other commanding or secluded situation ; in Rome, many of the pontifical offices were held by patricians, who occupied their own palaces ; but the Eastern temples were in general surrounded by spacious courts, and with buildings for the residence of the sacerdotal colleges. If these were not the models of the Christian establishments, the same ecclesiastical arrangements, the institution of a numerous and wealthy priestly order, attached to the churches,

(1) *Populi confluent ad ecclesias castâ celeritate, honestâ utriusque sexûs discretione.* August. de Civ. Dei, ii. 28. Compare Bingham, viii. 5. 5.



demanded the same accommodation. Thus a multitude of subordinate buildings would crowd around the central or more eminent house of God; at first, where mere convenience was considered, and where the mind had not awakened to the solemn impressions excited by vast and various architectural works, combined by a congenial style of building, and harmonised by skilful arrangement and subordination, they would be piled together irregularly and capriciously, obscuring that which was really grand, and displaying irreverent confusion rather than stately order. Gradually, as the sense of grandeur and solemnity dawned upon the mind, there would arise the desire of producing one general effect and impression; but this no doubt was the later development of a principle which, if at first dimly perceived, was by no means rigidly or consistently followed out. We must wait many centuries before we reach the culminating period of genuine Christian architecture.

*Sculpture.* II. Sculpture alone, of the fine arts, has been faithful to its parent Paganism. It has never cordially imbibed the spirit of Christianity. The second creative epoch (how poor, comparatively, in fertility and originality!) was contemporary and closely connected with the revival of classical literature in Europe. It has lent itself to Christian sentiment chiefly in two forms; as necessary and subordinate to architecture, and as a monumental sculpture.

Christianity was by no means so intolerant, at least after its first period, of the remains of ancient sculpture, or so perseveringly hostile to the art, as might have been expected from its severe aversion to idolatry. The earlier fathers, indeed, condemn the arts of sculpture and of painting as inseparably connected with Paganism. Every art which frames an image is irreclaimably idolatrous (1); and the stern Tertullian reproaches Hermogenes with the two deadly sins of painting and marrying (2). The Council of Elvira proscribed paintings on the walls of churches (3), which nevertheless became a common usage during the two next centuries.

In all respects, this severer sentiment was mitigated by time. The civil uses of sculpture were generally recognised. The Christian emperors erected, or permitted the adulation of their subjects to erect, their statues in the different cities. That of Constantine on the great porphyry column, with its singular and unchristian confusion of attributes, has been already noticed. Philostorgius indeed asserts that this statue became an object of worship even to the

(1) *Ubi artifices statuarum et imaginum et omnis generis simulachrorum diabolus sæculo intulit—caput facta est idolatria: ars omnis quæ idolum quoque modo edit.* Tertull. *de Idolatr.* c. iii. He has no language to express his horror that makers of images should be admitted into the clerical order.

(2) *Pingitillicitè, nubit assiduè, legem Dei in libidinem defendit, in artem contemnit; his fal-*

*sarius et cauterio et stylo.* In Hermog. cap. i. *Cauterio* refers to encaustic painting. The Apostolic Constitutions reckon a maker of idols with persons of infamous character and profession. viii. 32.

(3) *Placuit picturas in ecclesiâ esse non debere, ne quod colitur et adoratur, in parietibus depingatur.* Can. xxxvi.

Christians; that lights and frankincense were offered before it, and that the image was worshipped as that of a tutelary god (1). The sedition in Antioch arose out of insults to the statues of the emperors (2), and the erection of the statue of the empress before the great church in Constantinople gave rise to the last disturbance, which ended in the exile of Chrysostom (3). The statue of the emperor was long the representative of the imperial presence; it was revered in the capital and in the provincial cities with honours approaching to adoration (4). The modest law of Theodosius, by which he attempted to regulate these ceremonies, of which the adulation bordered at times on impiety, expressly reserved the excessive honours, sometimes lavished on these statues at the public games, for the supreme Deity (5).

The statues even of the gods were condemned with some reluctance and remorse. No doubt iconoclasm, under the first edicts of the emperors, raged in the provinces with relentless violence. Yet Constantine, we have seen, did not scruple to adorn his capital with images, both of gods and men, plundered indiscriminately from the temples of Greece. The Christians, indeed, asserted that they were set up for scorn and contempt.

Even Theodosius exempts such statues as were admirable as works of art from the common sentence of destruction (6). This doubtful toleration of profane art gradually gave place to the admission of Art into the service of Christianity.

Sculpture, and, still more, Painting, were received as the ministers of Christian piety, and allowed to lay their offerings at the feet of the new religion.

But the commencement of Christian art was slow, timid, and rude. It long preferred allegory to representation, the true and legitimate object of art (7). It expanded but tardily during the first centuries, from the significant symbol to the human form in colour or in marble.

The Cross was long the primal, and even the sole, symbol of Christianity—the cross in its rudest and its most artless form; for

(1) See p. 54. Philostorg. ii. 17.

(2) See p. 205.

(3) See p. 217.

(4) Εἰ γὰρ βασιλείας ἀπόντος εἰκὼν ἀναπληροῖ χάραν βασιλείας, καὶ προσκυνοῦσιν ἄρχοντες καὶ ἱερομνηστὶαι ἐπιτελοῦνται, καὶ ἄρχοντες υπαντῶσι, καὶ δῆμοι προσκυνοῦσιν οὐ πρὸς τὴν σάνδα μέλειποντες ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸν χαρακτῆρα τοῦ βασιλείας, οὐκ ἐν τῇ φύσει θεοῦ. Joann. Damascen. de Imagin. orat. 9. Jerome, however (on Daniel), compares it to the worship demanded by Nebuchadnezzar. Ergo iudices et principes sæculi, qui imperatorum statuas adorant et imagines, hoc se facere intelligent quod tres pueri facere nolentes placuere Deo.

(5) They were to prove their loyalty by the respect which they felt for the statue in their secret hearts: — excedeus cultura hominum dignitatum superno numini reservetur. Cod. Theod. xv. 4. 1.

(6) A particular temple was to remain open, in quâ simulachra feruntur posita, artis pretio quam divinitate metienda. Cod. Theod. xvi. 10. 8.

(7) Rumohr. Italienische Forschungen, i. p. 158. We want the German words *andeutung* (allusion or suggestion, but neither conveys the same forcible sense, and *darstellung*, actual representation or placing before the sight. The artists who employ the first can only address minds already furnished with the key to the symbolic or allegoric form. Imitation (the genuine object of art) speaks to all mankind.

many centuries elapsed before the image of the Saviour was wrought upon it (1). It was the copy of the common instrument of ignominious execution in all its nakedness; and nothing, indeed, so powerfully attests the triumph of Christianity as the elevation of this, which to the Jew and to the Heathen was the basest, the most degrading, punishment of the lowest criminal, the proverbial terror of the wretched slave, into an object for the adoration of ages, the reverence of nations. The glowing language of Chrysostom expresses the universal sanctity of the Cross in the fourth century. "Nothing so highly adorns the imperial crown as the Cross, which is more precious than the whole world: its form, at which, of old men shuddered with horror, is now so eagerly and emulously sought for, that it is found among princes and subjects, men and women, virgins and matrons, slaves and freemen; for all bear it about, perpetually impressed on the most honourable part of the body, or on the forehead, as on a pillar. This appears in the sacred temple, in the ordination of priests; it shines again on the body of the Lord, and in the mystic supper. It is to be seen every where in honour, in the private house and the public market-place, in the desert, in the highway, on mountains, in forests, on hills, on the sea, in ships, on islands, on our beds and on our clothes, on our arms, in our chambers, in our banquets, on gold and silver vessels, on gems, in the paintings of our walls, on the bodies of diseased beasts, on human bodies possessed by devils, in war and peace, by day, by night, in the dances of the feasting, and the meetings of the fasting and praying." In the time of Chrysostom the legend of the Discovery of the True Cross was generally received. "Why do all men vie with each other to approach that true Cross, on which the sacred body was crucified? Why do many, women as well as men, bear fragments of it set in gold as ornaments round their necks, though it was the sign of condemnation. Even emperors have laid aside the diadem to take up the Cross (2)."

(1) The author has expressed in a former work his impression on this most remarkable fact in the history of Christianity.

"In one respect it is impossible now to conceive the extent to which the Apostles of the crucified Jesus shocked all the feelings of mankind. The public establishment of Christianity, the adoration of ages, the reverence of nations, has thrown around the Cross of Christ an indelible and inalienable sanctity. No effort of the imagination can dissipate the illusion of dignity which has gathered round it, it has been so long discovered from all its coarse and humiliating associations, that it cannot be cast back and desecrated into its state of opprobrium and contempt. To the most daring unbeliever among ourselves it is the symbol—the absurd and irrational, he may conceive, but still the ancient and venerable symbol—of a powerful and influential religion. What was it to the Jew and the Heathen?—the basest, the most degrading, punishment of the lowest criminal, the proverbial

terror of the wretched slave! It was to them what the most despicable and revolting instrument of public execution is to us. Yet to the Cross of Christ men turned from deities, in which were embodied every attribute of strength, power, and dignity," etc. Milman's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 279.

(2) Chrysost. *Oper.* vol. i. p. 57. 569. See in Munter's work (p. 68. et seq.) the various forms which the Cross assumed, and the fanciful notions concerning it.

*Ipsa species crucis quid est nisi forma quadrata mundi? Oriens de vertice fulgens; Arcion dextra tenet; Auster in levâ consistit; Occidens sub plantis formatur. Unde Apostolus dicit: ut sciamus, quæ sit altitudo, et latitudo, et longitudo, et profundum. Aves quando volant ad æthera, formam crucis assumunt; homo natans per aquas, vel ocras, formâ crucis velitur. Navis per maria antennâ crucis similitudine sufflatur. Than litera signum salutis et crucis describitur.* Hieronym. in Marc. xv.



A more various symbolism gradually grew up, and extended to what approached nearer to works of arts. Its rude designs were executed in engravings on seals, or on lamps, or glass vessels, and before long in relief on marble, or in paintings on the walls of the cemeteries. The earliest of these were the seal rings, of which many now exist, with Gnostic symbols and inscriptions. These seals were considered indispensable in ancient housekeeping. The Christian was permitted, according to Clement of Alexandria, to bestow on his wife one ring of gold, in order that, being entrusted with the care of his domestic concerns, she might seal up that which might be insecure. But these rings must not have any idolatrous engraving, only such as might suggest Christian or gentle thoughts, the dove, the fish (1), the ship, the anchor, or the Apostolic fisherman fishing for men, which would remind them of children drawn out of the waters of baptism (2). Tertullian mentions a communion cup with the image of the Good Shepherd embossed upon it. But Christian symbolism soon disdained these narrow limits, extended itself into the whole domain of the Old Testament as well as of the Gospel, and even ventured at times over the unhallowed borders of Paganism. The persons and incidents of the Old Testament had all a typical or allegorical reference to the doctrines of Christianity (3). Adam asleep, while Eve was taken from his side, represented the death of Christ; Eve, the mother of all who are born to new life; Adam and Eve with the serpent had a latent allusion to the new Adam and the Cross. Cain and Abel, Noah and the ark with the dove and the olive branch, the sacrifice of Isaac, Joseph sold by his brethren as a bondsman, Moses by the burning bush, breaking the tables of the law, striking water from the rock, with Pharaoh perishing in the Red Sea, the ark of God, Samson bearing the gates of Gaza, Job on the dung-heap, David and Goliath, Elijah in the car of fire, Tobias with the fish, Daniel in the lions' den, Jonah issuing from the whale's belly or under the gourd, the three children in the fiery furnace, Ezekiel by the valley of dead bones, were favourite subjects, and had all their mystic significance. They reminded the devout worshipper of the Sacrifice, Resurrection, and Redemption of Christ. The direct illustrations of the New Testament showed the Lord of the Church on a high mountain, with four rivers, the Gospels, flowing from it; the Good Shepherd bearing the lamb (4), and sometimes the Apostles and Saints of a later time appeared in the symbols. Paganism lent some of her spoils to the conqueror (5).

(1) The ΙΧΘΥΣ, according to the rule of the ancient anagram, meant Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Θεοῦ Υἱός Σωτήρ.

(2) Clem. Alex. *Pædagog.* iii. 2.

(3) See Mamachi, *De Costumi di' primitivi Christiani*, lib. i. c. iv.

(4) There is a Heathen prototype (see R. Bouchette) even for this good shepherd, and one

of the earliest images is encircled with the "Four Seasons" represented by Genii with Pagan attributes. Compare Munter, p. 61. Tombstones, and even inscriptions, were freely borrowed. One Christian tomb has been published by P. Lupi, inscribed "Diis Manibus."

(5) In three very curious dissertations in the last volume of the *Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions on works of art in the catacombs of*

The Saviour was represented under the person and with the lyre of Orpheus, either as the civiliser of men, or in allusion to the Orphic poetry, which had already been interpolated with Christian images. Hence also the lyre was the emblem of truth. Other images, particularly those of animals, were not uncommon (1). The church was represented by a ship, the anchor denoted the pure ground of faith; the stag implied the hart which thirsted after the water-brooks; the rapidity with which men ought to run and embrace the doctrine of salvation; the hare the timid Christian hunted by persecutors; the lion prefigured strength, or appeared as the emblem of the tribe of Judah; the fish was an anagram of the Saviour's name; the dove indicated the simplicity, the cock the vigilance, of Christian; the peacock and the phoenix the Resurrection.

But these were simple and artless memorials to which devotion gave all their value and significance; in themselves they neither had nor aimed at, grandeur or beauty. They touched the soul by the reminiscences which they awakened, or the thoughts which they suggested; they had nothing of that inherent power over the emotions of the soul which belongs to the higher works of art (2).

Art must draw nearer to human nature and to the truth of life, before it can accomplish its object. The elements of this feeling, even the first sense of external grandeur and beauty, had yet to be infused into the Christian mind. The pure and holy and majestic inward thoughts and sentiments had to work into form, and associate themselves with appropriate visible images. This want and this desire were long unfelt.

The person of the Saviour was a subject of grave dispute among the order fathers. Some took the expressions of the sacred writings in a literal sense, and insisted that his outward form was mean and

Person of  
the Sa-  
viour.

Rome, M. Raoul Rochette has shown how much, either through the employment of Heathen artists, or their yet imperfectly unheathenised Christianity, the Christians borrowed from the monumental decorations, the symbolic figures, and even the inscriptions, of Heathenism. M. Rochette says, "*La physionomie presque payenne qu'offre la décoration des catacombes de Rome*," p. 96. The Protestant travellers, Burnet and Misson, from the singular mixture of the sacred and the profane in these monuments, inferred that these catacombs were common places of burial for Heathens and Christians. The Roman antiquarians, however, have clearly proved the contrary. M. Raoul Rochette, as well as M. Rostelli (in an *Essay in the Roms Beschreibung*), consider this point conclusively made out in favour of the Roman writers. M. R. Rochette has adduced monuments in which the symbolic images and the language of Heathenism and Christianity are strangely mingled together. Munter has observed the Jordan represented as a river god.

(1) The catacombs at Rome are the chief authorities for this symbolic school of Christian art. They are represented in the works of Bosio, Roma Sotteranea, Aringhi, Bottari, and Boldetti.

But perhaps the best view of them, being in fact a very judicious and well-arranged selection of the most curious works of early Christian art, may be found in the *Sinnbilder und Kunstvorstellungen der alten Christen*, by Bishop Munter.

(2) All these works in their different forms are in general of coarse and inferior execution. The funereal vases found in the Christian cemeteries are of the lowest style of workmanship. The senator Buonarroti, in his work, "*De' Vetri Cemeteriali*," thus accounts for this:—"Stettero sempre lontane di quelle arti, colle quali avessero potuto correr pericolo di contaminarsi colla idolatria, e da ciò avvenne, che pochi, o niuno di essi si diede alla pittura e alla scultura, le quali avevano per oggetto principale di rappresentare le deità, e le favole de' gentili. Sicche volendo i fedeli adornar con simboli devoti i loro vasi, erano forzati per lo più a valersi di artefici inesperti, e che professavano altri mestieri." See Mamachi, vol. i. p. 275. Compare Rumohr, who suggests other reasons for the rudeness of the earliest Christian relief, in my opinion, though by no means irreconcilable with this, neither so simple nor satisfactory. Page 170.

unseemly. Justin Martyr speaks of his want of form and comeliness (1). Tertullian, who could not but be in extremes, expresses the same sentiment with his accustomed vehemence. The person of Christ wanted not merely divine majesty, but even human beauty (2). Clement of Alexandria maintains the sage opinion (3). But the most curious illustration of this notion occurs in the work of Origen against Celsus. In the true spirit of Grecian art and philosophy, Celsus denies that the Deity could dwell in a mean form or low stature. Origen is embarrassed with the argument; he fears to recede from the literal interpretation of Isaiah, but endeavours to soften it off, and denies that it refers to lowliness of stature, or means more than the absence of noble form or pre-eminent beauty. He then triumphantly adduces the verse of the forty-fourth Psalm, “ Ride on in thy loveliness and in thy beauty (4).”

But as the poetry of Christianity obtained more full possession of the human mind, these debasing and inglorious conceptions were repudiated by the more vivid imagination of the great writers in the fourth century. The great principle of Christian art began to awaken; the outworking as it were, of the inward purity, beauty, and harmony, upon the symmetry of the external form, and the lovely expression of the countenance. Jerom, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, with one voice, assert the majesty and engaging appearance of the Saviour. The language of Jerom first shows the sublime conception which was brooding, as it were, in the Christian mind, and was at length slowly to develope itself up to the gradual perfection of Christian art. “ Assuredly that splendour and majesty of the hidden divinity, which shone even in his human countenance, could not but attract at first sight all beholders.” “ Unless he had something celestial in his countenance and in his look, the Apostles would not immediately have followed him (5).” “ The Heavenly Father forced upon him in full streams that corporeal grace, which is distilled drop by drop upon mortal man.” Such are the glowing expressions of Chrysostom (6). Gregory of Nyssa applies all the vivid imagery of the Song of Solomon to the person as well as to the doctrine of Christ; and Augustine declares that “ He

(1) Τὸν αἰδῆν καὶ ἄτιμον φανέντα. Dial. cum Triph. 85. and 88. 100.

(2) Quodcumque illud corpusculum sit, quoniam habitum, et quoniam conspectum sit, si inglorius, si ignobilis, si inhonorabilis; meus erit Christus. — Sed species ejus inhonorata, deficiens ultra omnes homines. Contr. Marc. iii. 17. Ne aspectu quidam honestus, Adv. Judæos, c. 14. Etiam despicientium formam ejus hæc erat vox. Adeo nec humane honestatis corpus fuit, nedum cælestis claritatis. De Carn. Christi. c. 9.

(3) Pædagog. iii. 1.

(4) Ἀμύχανον γὰρ ὅσα θεῖόν τι πλέον τῶν ἄλλων προσῶν, μηδὲν ἄλλου διαφέρειν· τοῦτο δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλου διέειπεν,

ἀλλ', ὥς φασι, μικρόν, καὶ δυσειδές, καὶ ἀγενές ἦν. Celsus, apud Origen. vi. 75. Origen quotes the text of the LXX, in which it is the forty-fourth, and thus translated: Τῇ ὡραιότητι σου, καὶ τῷ κάλλει σου καὶ ἔντεινον, καὶ κατευοδοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύει.

(5) Certe fulgor ipsa et majestas divinitatis occulte, quæ etiam in humanâ facie relucebat, ex primo ad se venientes trahere poterat aspectu. Hieronym. in Matth. c. ix. 9.

Nisi enim habuisset et in vultu quiddam et in oculis sidereum, nunquam eum statim secuti fuissent Apostoli. Epist. ad Princip. Virginem.

(6) In Psalm. xlv.



was beautiful on his mother's bosom, beautiful in the arms of his parents, beautiful upon the Cross, beautiful in the sepulchre."

There were some, however, who even at this, and to a much later period, chiefly among those addicted to monkish austerity, who adhered to the older opinion, as though human beauty were something carnal and material. St. Basil interprets even the forty-fourth Psalm in the more austere sense. Many of the painters among the Greeks, even in the eighth century, who were monks of the rule of St. Basil, are said to have been too faithful to the judgment of their master, or perhaps their rude art was better qualified to represent a mean figure, with harsh outline and stiff attitude, and a blackened countenance, rather than majesty of form or beautiful expression. Such are the Byzantine pictures of this school. The harsh Cyril of Alexandria repeats the assertion of the Saviour's mean appearance, even beyond the ordinary race of men, in the strongest language (1). This controversy proves decisively that there was no traditional type, which was admitted to represent the human form of the Saviour. The distinct assertion of Augustine, that the form and countenance of Christ were entirely unknown, and painted with every possible variety of expression, is conclusive as to the West (2). In the East we may dismiss at once as a manifest fable, probably of local superstition, the statue of Christ at Cæsarea Philippi, representing him in the act of healing the woman with the issue of blood (3). But there can be no doubt that paintings, purporting to be actual resemblances of Jesus, of Peter, and of Paul, were current in the time of Eusebius in the East (4), though we are disinclined to receive the authority of a later writer, that Constantine adorned his new city with likenesses of Christ and his Apostles.

The earliest images emanated, no doubt, from the Gnostic sects, who not merely blended the Christian and Pagan, or Oriental notions on their gems and seals, engraved with the mysterious Abraxas; but likewise, according to their eclectic system, consecrated small golden or silver images of all those ancient sages whose doctrines

Earliest  
images  
Gnostic.

(1) Ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἄτιμον, ἡκλειπον παρὰ πάντας τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. De Nud. Noe. lib. ii. t. i. p. 43.

(2) Qua fuerit ille facie nos penitus ignoramus: nam et ipsius Dominice facies carnis innumerabilium cogitationum diversitate variatur et fingitur, quæ tamen una erat, quæcunque erat. De Trin. lib. vii. c. 4, 5.

The Christian apologists uniformly acknowledge the charge, that they have no altars or images. Minuc. Fel. Octavius, x. p. 61. Arnob. vi. post init. Origen. contra Celsum, viii. p. 389. Compare Jablonski (Dissertatio de Origine Imaginum Christi, opuscul. vol. iii. p. 377.) who well argues that, consistently with Jewish manners, there could not have been any likeness of the Lord. Compare Pearson on the Creed, vol. ii. p. 101.

(3) Euseb. H. E. vii. 18. with the Excursus of Heinichen. These were, probably, two bronze figures, one of a kneeling woman in the act of supplication; the other, the upright figure of a man, probably of a Caesar, which the Christian inhabitants of Cæsarea Philippi transformed into the Saviour and the woman in the Gospels: Τοῦτον δὲ τὸν ἀνδριάντα εἰκόνα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φέρον ἔλεγον. Eusebius seems desirous of believing the story. Compare Munter.

(4) Ὅτε καὶ τῶν Ἀποστόλων τῶν αὐτοῦ τὰς εἰκόνας Παύλου καὶ Πέτρου καὶ αὐτοῦ δὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ διὰ χρωμάτων ἐν γραφαῖς σαζόμενας ἰσπορήσαμεν. Ibid. loc. cit.

they had adopted, or had fused together in their wild and various theories. The image of Christ appeared with those of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and probably some of the eastern philosophers (1). The Carpocratians had painted portraits of Christ; and Marcellina (2), a celebrated female heresiarch, exposed to the view of the Gnostic church in Rome, the portraits of Jesus and St. Paul, of Homer, and of Pythagoras. Of this nature, no doubt, were the images of Abraham, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Apollonius, and Christ, set up in his private chapel by the Emperor Alexander Severus. These small images (3); which varied very much, it should seem, in form and feature, could contribute but little, if in the least, to form that type of superhuman beauty, which might mingle the sentiment of human sympathy with reverence for the divinity of Christ. Christian art long brooded over such feelings as those expressed by Jerome and Augustine, before it could even attempt to embody them in marble or colour (4).

The earliest pictures of the Saviour seem formed on one type or model. They all represent the oval countenance, slightly lengthened; the grave, soft, and melancholy expression; the short thin beard; the hair parted on the forehead into two long masses, which fall upon the shoulders (5). Such are the features which characterise the earliest extant painting, that on the vault of the cemetery of St. Callistus, in which the Saviour is represented as far as his bust, like the images on bucklers in use among the Romans (6). A

The earliest portraits of the Saviour.

(1) Irenæus de Har. i. c. 84. (edit. Grabe). Epiphani. Hæres. xxvii. 6. Augustin. de Hæresib. c. vii. These images of Christ were said to have been derived from the collection of Pontius Pilate. Compare Jablonski's Dissertation.

(2) Marcellina lived about the middle of the second century, or a little later.

(3) Of these Gnostic images of Christ there are only two extant which seem to have some claim to authenticity and antiquity. Those from the collection of Chifflet are now considered to represent Serapis. One is mentioned by M. Raoul Rochette (Types Imitatifs de l'Art du Christianisme, p. 21.); it is a stone, a kind of tessera with a head of Christ, young and beardless, in profile, with the word ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ in Greek characters, with the symbolic fish below. This is in the collection of M. Fortia d'Urban, and is engraved as a vignette to M. R. Rochette's essay. The other is adduced in an "Essay on Ancient Coins, Medals, and Gems, as illustrating the Progress of Christianity in the Early Ages, by the Rev. R. Walsh." This is a kind of medal or tessera of metal, representing Christ as he is described in the apocryphal letter of Lentulus to the Roman senate. (Fabric. Cod. Apoc. Nov. Test. p. 301, 302.) It has a head of Christ, the hair parted over the forehead, covering the ears, and falling over the shoulders; the shape is long, the beard short and thin. It has the name of Jesus in Hebrew, and has not the *nimbus*, or glory. On the reverse is an inscription in a kind of cabalistic character, of which the sense seems to be, "The Messiah reigns in peace; God is made man." This may possibly be a tessera of the Jew-

ish Christians; or modelled after a Gnostic type of the first age of Christianity. See Discours sur les Types Imitatifs de l'Art du Christianisme, par M. Raoul Rochette.

(4) I must not omit the description of the person of our Saviour, in the spurious Epistle of Lentulus to the Roman Senate (see Fabric. Cod. Apoc. N. T. i. p. 301.), since it is referred to constantly by writers on early Christian art. But what proof is there of the existence of this epistle previous to the great æra of Christian painting? "He was a man of tall and well-proportioned form; the countenance severe and impressive, so as to move the beholders at once to love and awe. His hair was of the colour of wine (*vinici coloris*), reaching to his ears, with no radiation (*sine radiatione*, without the *nimbus*), and standing up, from his ears, clustering and bright, and flowing down over his shoulders, parted on the top according to the fashion of the Nazarenes. The brow high and open; the complexion clear, with a delicate tinge of red; the aspect frank and pleasing; the nose and mouth finely formed; the beard thick, parted, and the colour of the hair; the eyes blue, and exceedingly bright." "His countenance was of wonderful sweetness and gravity; no one ever saw him laugh, though he was seen to weep; his stature was tall; the hands and arms finely formed." "He was the most beautiful of the sons of men."

(5) Raoul Rochette, p. 26.

(6) Bottori, *Pittura e Scultura Sacra*, vol. ii. tav. lxx. p. 42.

later painting, in the chapel of the cemetery of St. Pontianus, resembles this (1); and a third was discovered in the catacomb of St. Callistus by Boldetti, but unfortunately perished while he was looking at it, in the attempt to remove it from the wall. The same countenance appears on some, but not the earliest, reliefs on the sarcophagi, five of which may be referred, according to M. Rochette, to the time of Julian. Of one, that of Olybrius, the date appears certain—the close of the fourth century. These, the paintings at least, are no doubt the work of Greek artists; and this head may be considered the archetype, the Hieratic model, of the Christian conception of the Saviour, imagined in the East, and generally adopted in the West (2).

The Father  
rarely re-  
presented.

Reverential awe, diffidence in their own skill, the still dominant sense of the purely spiritual nature of the Parental Deity (3), or perhaps the exclusive habit of dwelling upon the Son as the direct object of religious worship, restrained early Christian art from those attempts to which we are scarcely reconciled by the sublimity and originality of Michael Angelo and Raffaele. Even the symbolic representation of the Father was rare. Were it does appear, it is under the symbol of an immense hand issuing from a cloud, or a ray of light streaming from heaven, to imply, it may be presumed, the creative and all-enlightening power of the Universal Father (4).

The Vir-  
gin.

The Virgin Mother could not but offer herself to the imagination, and be accepted at once as the subject of Christian art. As respect for the mother of Christ deepened into reverence, reverence bowed down to adoration; as she became the mother of God, and herself a deity in popular worship, this worship was the parent, and, in some sense, the offspring of art. Augustine indeed admits that the real features of the Virgin, as of the Saviour, were unknown (5). But the fervent language of Jerome shows that art had already attempted to shadow out the conception of mingling virgin purity and maternal tenderness, which as yet probably was content to dwell within the verge of human nature, and aspired not to mingle a divine idealism with these more mortal feelings. The

(1) This, however, was probably repainted in the time of Hadrian I.

(2) Rumohr considers a statue of the Good Shepherd in the Vatican collection, from its style, to be a very early work; the oldest monument of Christian sculpture, prior to the urn of Junius Bassus, which is of the middle of the fourth century. *Italianische Forschungen*, vol. i. p. 168. In that usually thought the earliest, that of Junius Bassus, Jesus Christ is represented between the Apostles, beardless, seated in a curule chair, with a roll half unfolded in his hand, and under his feet a singular representation of the upper part of a man holding an inflated veil with his two hands, a common symbol or personification of heaven. See R. Rochette, p. 43., who considers these sarcophagi anterior to the formation of the ordinary type.

(3) Compare Munter, ii. p. 49. *Nefas habent*

*docti ejus (ecclesie Catholice) credere Deum figurâ humani corporis terminatum.* August. Conf. vi. 11.

(4) M. Emeric David (in his *Discours sur les Anciens Monumens*, to which I am indebted for much information,) says that the French artists had first the *heureuse hardiesse* of representing the Eternal Father under the human form. The instance to which he alludes is contained in a Latin Bible (in the Cabinet Imperial) cited by Montfaucon, but not fully described. It was presented to Charles the Bold by the canons of the church of Tours, in the year 859. This period is far beyond the bounds of our present history. See therefore E. David, pp. 43. 46.

(5) *Neque enim novimus faciem Virginis Mariæ.* Augustin. de Trin. c. viii. *Ut ipsa corporis facies simulacrum fuerit mentis, figura probitatis.* Ambros. de Virgin. lib. ii. c. 2.



outward form and countenance could not but be the image of the purity and gentleness of the soul within : and this primary object of Christian art could not but give rise to one of its characteristic distinctions from that of the ancients, the substitution of mental expression for purely corporeal beauty. As reverential modesty precluded all exposure of the form, the countenance was the whole picture. This reverence, indeed, in the very earliest specimens of the art, goes still further, and confines itself to the expression of composed and dignified attitude. The artists did not even venture to expose the face. With one exception, the Virgin appears veiled on the reliefs on the sarcophagi, and in the earliest paintings. The oldest known picture of the Virgin is in the catacomb of St. Callistus, in which she appears seated in the calm majesty, and in the dress, of a Roman matron. It is the transition, as it were, from ancient to modern art, which still timidly adheres to its conventional type of dignity (1). But in the sarcophagi, art has already more nearly approximated to its most exquisite subject — the Virgin Mother is seated, with the divine child in her lap, receiving the homage of the Wise Men. She is still veiled (2), but with the rounded form and grace of youth, and a kind of sedate chastity of expression in her form, which seems designed to convey the feeling of gentleness and holiness. Two of these sarcophagi, one in the Vatican collection, and one at Milan, appear to disprove the common notion that the representation of the Virgin was unknown before the Council of Ephesus (3). That council, in its zeal against the doctrines of Nestorius, established, as it has been called, a Hieratic type of the Virgin, which is traced throughout Byzantine art, and on the coins of the Eastern empire. This type, however, gradually degenerates with the darkness of the age, and the decline of art. The countenance, sweetly smiling on the child, becomes sad and severe. The head is bowed with a gloomy and almost sinister expression, and the countenance gradually darkens, till it assumes a black colour, and seems to adapt itself in this respect to an ancient tradition. At length even the sentiment of maternal affection is effaced, both the mother and child become stiff and lifeless, the child is swathed in tight bands, and has an expression of pain rather than of gentleness or placid infancy (4).

The apostles, particularly St. Peter and St. Paul, were among the earlier objects of Christian art. Though in one place, St. Augustine asserts that the persons of the Apostles were equally un-

The  
Apostles.

(1) Bottari, *Pittura e Sculture Sacre*, t. iii. p. 111. tav. 218. See *Mémoire de M. Raoul Rochette*, Académ. Inscript.

(2) In Bottari there is one picture of the Virgin with the head naked, t. ii. tav. cxxvi. The only one known to M. Raoul Rochette.

(3) A. D. 431. This opinion is maintained by Basnage and most Protestant writers.

(4) Compare Raoul Rochette, page 35. M. R

Rochette observes much similarity between the pictures of the Virgin ascribed to St. Luke, the tradition of whose painting ascends to the sixth century, and the Egyptian works which represent Isis nursing Horus. I have not thought it necessary to notice further these palpable forgeries, though the object, in so many places, of popular worship.

known with that of the Saviour, in another he acknowledges that their pictures were exhibited on the walls of many churches for the edification of the faithful (1). In a vision ascribed to Constantine, but of very doubtful authority, the Emperor is said to have recognised the apostles by their likeness to their portraits (2). A picture known to St. Ambrose pretended to have come down by regular tradition from their time : and Chrysostom, when he studied the writings, gazed with reverence on what he supposed an authentic likeness of the apostle (3). Paul and Peter appear on many of the oldest monuments, on the glass vessels, fragments of which have been discovered, and on which Jerome informs us that they were frequently painted. They are found, as we have seen, on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, and on many others. In one of these, in which the costume is Roman, St. Paul is represented bald, and with the high nose, as he is described in the Philopatri (4), which, whatever its age, has evidently taken these personal peculiarities of the Apostle from the popular Christian representations. St. Peter has usually a single tuft of hair on his bald forehead (5). Each has a book, the only symbol of his apostleship. St. Peter has neither the sword nor the keys. In the same relief, St. John and St. James are distinguished from the rest by their youth ; already, therefore, this peculiarity was established which prevails throughout Christian art. The majesty of age, and a kind of dignity of precedence, are attributed to Peter and Paul, while all the grace of youth, and the most exquisite gentleness, are centered in John. They seem to have assumed this peculiar character of expression, even before their distinctive symbols.

Martyrdom not represented.

It may excite surprise that the acts of martyrdom did not become the subjects of Christian art, till far down in the dark ages. That of St. Sebastian, a relief in terra-cotta, which formerly existed in the cemetery of St. Priscilla, and that of Peter and Paul in the Basilica Siciniana, assigned by Ciampini to the fifth century, are rare exceptions, and both of doubtful date and authenticity. The martyrdom of St. Felicitas and her seven children, discovered in 1812, in a small oratory within the baths of Titus, cannot be earlier, according to M. R. Rochette, than the seventh century (6).

The absence of all gloomy or distressing subjects is the remarkable and characteristic feature in the catacombs of Rome and in all the earliest Christian art. A modern writer, who has studied the subject with profound attention, has expressed himself in the fol-

(1) St. Augustin in Genesin, cap. xxii. Quod pluribus locis simul eos (apostolos cum illo Christo) pictos viderint\*\*\* in pictis parietibus. Augustin. de Cons. Evang. i. 16.

(2) Hadrian I. Epist. ad Imp. Constantin. et Iren. Concil. Nic. ii. art. 2.

(3) These two assertions rest on the authority of Joannes Damascenus, de Imagin.

(4) Γαλιλαῖος ἀναπαλαιότητας ἐπιφύρινος. Philop. c. xii.

(5) Munier says the arrest of St. Peter (Acts xii. 1. 3.) is the only subject from the Acts of the Apostles among the monuments in the catacombs. ii. p. 104.

(6) Raoul Rochette, in Mém. de l'Académie, tom. xiii. p. 165.

lowing language (1): — “The catacombs destined for the sepulture of the primitive Christians, for a long time peopled with martyrs, ornamented during times of persecution, and under the dominion of melancholy thoughts and painful duties, nevertheless every where represent in all the historic parts of these paintings only what is noble and exalted (2), and in that which constitutes the purely decorative part only pleasing and graceful subjects, the images of the good shepherd, representations of the vintage, of the agape, with pastoral scenes: the symbols are fruits, flowers, palms, crowns, lambs, doves, in a word nothing but what excites emotions of joy, innocence, and charity. Entirely occupied with the celestial recompense which awaited them after the trials of their troubled life, and often of so dreadful a death, the Christians saw in death, and even in execution, only a way by which they arrived at this everlasting happiness; and far from associating with this image that of the tortures or privations which opened heaven before them, they took pleasure in enlivening it with smiling colours, or presented it under agreeable symbols, adorning it with flowers and vine leaves; for it is thus that the asylum of death appears to us in the Christian catacombs. There is no sign of mourning, no token of resentment, no expression of vengeance; all breathes softness, benevolence, charity (3).”

It may seem even more singular, that the passion of our Lord himself remained a subject interdicted, as it were, by awful reverence. The cross, it has been said, was the symbol of Christianity many centuries before the crucifix (4). It was rather a cheerful and consolatory than a depressing and melancholy sign; it was adorned with flowers, with crowns, and precious stones, a pledge of the resurrection, rather than a memorial of the passion. The catacombs of Rome, faithful to their general character, offer no instance of a crucifixion, nor does any allusion to such a subject of art occur in any early writer (5). Cardinal Bona gives the following as the progress of the gradual change. I. The simple cross. II. The cross with the lamb at the foot of it (6). III. Christ clothed, on the cross, with hands uplifted in prayer, but not nailed to it. IV. Christ fastened to the cross with four nails, still living, and with

The  
crucifix.

(1) M. D'Agincourt says, “Il n'a rencontré lui-même dans ces souterrains aucune trace de nul autre tableau (one of barbarian and late design had before been noticed) représentant une martyre. Hist. de l'Art.

(2) Des traits héroïques.

(3) Gregory of Nyssa, however, describes the heroic acts of St. Theodorus as painted on the walls of a church dedicated to that saint. The painter had represented his sufferings, the forms of the tyrants like wild beasts. The fiery furnace, the death of the athlete of Christ—all this had the painter expressed by colours, as in a book, and adorned the temple like a pleasant and bloom-

ing meadow. The dumb walls speak and edify.

(4) See, among other authorities, Munter, page 77. Es ist unmöglich das Alter der Crucifixe genau zu bestimmen. Vor dem Ende des siebenten Jahrhunderts kannte die Kirche sie nicht.

(5) The decree of the Quinisextan Council, in 695, is the clearest proof that up to that period the Passion had been usually represented under a symbolic or allegoric form.

(6) Sub cruce sanguinea niveo stat Christus in agno  
Agnus ut innocua injusto datur hostia letho.

Pauli. Nolan, Epist. 32.



open eyes. He was not represented as dead till the tenth or eleventh century (1). There is some reason to believe that the bust of the Saviour first appeared on the cross, and afterwards the whole person; the head was at first erect, with some expression of divinity; by degrees it drooped with the agony of pain, the face was wan and furrowed, and death, with all its anguish, was imitated by the utmost power of coarse art—mere corporeal suffering without sublimity, all that was painful in truth, with nothing that was tender and affecting. This change took place among the monkish artists of the Lower Empire. Those of the order of St. Basil introduced it into the West; and from that time these painful images, with those of martyrdom, and every scene of suffering, which could be imagined by the gloomy fancy of anchorites, who could not be moved by less violent excitement, spread throughout Christendom. It required all the wonderful magic of Italian art to elevate them into sublimity.

Paintings  
at Nola.

But early Christian art, at least that of painting, was not content with these simpler subjects; it endeavoured to represent designs of far bolder and more intricate character. Among the earliest descriptions of Christian painting is that in the Church of St. Felix, by Paulinus of Nola (2). In the colonnades of that church were painted scenes from the Old Testament: among them were the Passage of the Red Sea, Joshua and the Ark of God, Ruth and her Sister-in-law, one deserting, the other following her parent in fond fidelity (3); an emblem, the poet suggests, of mankind, part deserting, part adhering to the true faith. The object of this embellishment of the churches was to beguile the rude minds of the illiterate peasants who thronged with no very exalted motives to the altar of St. Felix—to preoccupy their minds with sacred subjects, so that they might be less eager for the festival banquets, held with such munificence and with such a concourse of strangers, at the tomb of the martyr (4). These gross and irreligious desires led them to the church; yet, gazing on these pictures, they would not merely

(1) De cruce Vaticanâ.

(2) The lines are not without merit:—

Quo duce Jordanes suspensus gurgite fixis  
Fluctibus, a facie divinæ restitit arcæ.  
Vis nova divisit flumen: pars amne recluso  
Constitit, et fluvii pars in mare lapsa cucurrit,  
Destituitque vadum: et validus qui forte rucbat  
Impetus, adstrictas altè cumulaverat undas,  
Et tremulâ compage minax pendebat aquæ mons  
Despectans transire pedes arente profundo;  
Et medio pedibus siccis in flumine ferri  
Pulverulentæ hominum duro vestigia limo.

If this description is drawn from the picture, not from the book, the painter must have possessed some talent for composition and for landscape, as well as for the drawing of figures

(3) Quum geminæ scindunt sese in diversa sorores;  
Ruth sequitur sanctam, quam deserit Orpa, parentem:  
Perfidam nurus una, fidem nurus altera monstrat  
Præfert una Deum patriæ, patriam altera vitæ

(4) Forte requiratur, quamvis ratione gerendi  
Sederit hæc nobis sententia, pingere sanctas  
Raro more domos animantibus adsimulatis.  
\* \* \* turba frequentior hic est  
Rusticitas non casta fide, neque docta legendi.  
Hæc adsueta diu sacris servire profanis,  
Ventre Deo, tandem convertitur advena Christo.  
Dum sanctorum opera in Christo miratur aperta.  
Propterea visum nobis opus utile, totis  
Felicis domibus pictura illudare sanctæ:  
Si forte attonitas hæc per spectacula mentes  
Agrestum caperet facata coloribus umbra,  
Quæ super exprimitur literis—ut littera monstret  
Quod manus explicuit: dumque omnes picta vicissim  
Ostendunt releguntque sibi, vel tardius escæ  
Sunt memores, dum grata oculis jejunia pascunt:  
Atque ita se melior stupefactis inserat usus,  
Dum fallit pictura famem; sanctasque legenti  
Historias castorum operum subrepsit honestas  
Exemplis inducta piis; potatur hianti  
Sobrietas, nimii subeunt obliuia vini:  
Dumque dieni ducunt spatio majore tuentes,  
Pocula rarescunt, quia per mirantia tracto  
Tempore, jam paucæ superant epulantibus horæ.  
In Natal. Felic., Poema xlv.

be awakened by these holy examples to purer thoughts and holier emotions; they would feast their eyes instead of their baser appetites; an involuntary sobriety and forgetfulness of the wine flagon would steal over their souls; at all events, they would have less time to waste in the indulgence of their looser festivity.

Christianity has been the parent of music, probably as far surpassing in skill and magnificence the compositions of earlier times, as the cathedral organ the simpler instruments of the Jewish or Pagan religious worship. But this perfection of the art belongs to a much later period in Christian history. Like the rest of its service, the music of the Church no doubt grew up from a rude and simple, to a more splendid and artificial form. The practice of singing hymns is coeval with Christianity; the hearers of the Apostles sang the praises of God; and the first sound which reached the Pagan ear from the secluded sanctuaries of Christianity was the hymn to Christ as God. The Church succeeded to an inheritance of religious lyrics as unrivalled in the history of poetry as of religion (1). The Psalms were introduced early into the public service; but at first, apparently, though some psalms may have been sung on appropriate occasions — the 73d, called the morning, and the 141st, the evening psalm—the whole Psalter was introduced only as part of the Old Testament, and read in the course of the service (2). With the poetry did they borrow the music of the Synagogue? Was this music the same which had filled the spacious courts of the Temple, perhaps answered to those sad strains which had been heard beside the waters of the Euphrates, or even descended from still earlier times of glory, when Deborah or when Miriam struck their harps to the praise of God? This question it must be impossible to answer; and no tradition, as far as we are aware, indicates the source from which the Church borrowed her primitive harmonies, though the probability is certainly in favour of their Jewish parentage.

Music.

The Christian hymns of the primitive churches seem to have been confined to the glorification of their God and Saviour (3). Prayer was considered the language of supplication and humiliation; the soul awoke, as it were, in the hymn, to more ardent expressions of gratitude and love. Probably, the music was nothing more at first than a very simple accompaniment, or no more than the accordence of the harmonious voices; it was the humble subsidiary of the hymn of praise, not itself the soul-engrossing art (4). Nothing could be more simple than the earliest recorded hymns; they were fragments

(1) The Temple Service, in Lightfoot's works, gives the Psalms which were appropriate to each day. The author has given a slight outline of this hymnology of the Temple in the Quarterly Review, vol. xxxviii. page 20.

(2) Bingham's Antiquities, vol. xiv. p. 1. 5.

3) Gregory of Nyssa defines a hymn—*ὕμνος*

*ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπὶ τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἡμῖν ἀγαθοῖς ἀνατιθεμένη τῇ Θεῷ εὐφημία.* See Psalm ii.

(4) Private individuals wrote hymns to Christ, which were generally sung. Euseb. H. E. v. 28.; vii. 24.

from the Scripture—the doxology, “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;” the angelic hymn, “Glory be to God on high;” the cherubic hymn from Revel. iv. 12.—“Holy, holy, holy;” the hymn of victory, Rev. xv. 3., “Great and marvellous are thy works.” It was not improbably the cherubic-hymn, to which Pliny alludes, as forming part of the Christian worship. The “Magnificat” and the “Nunc dimittis” were likewise sung from the earliest ages; the Halleluia was the constant prelude or burden of the hymn (1). Of the character of the music few and imperfect traces are found. In Egypt the simplest form long prevailed. In the monastic establishments one person arose and repeated the psalm, the others sat around in silence on their lowly seats, and responded, as it were, to the psalm within their hearts (2). In Alexandria, by the order of Athanasius, the psalms were repeated with the slightest possible inflection of voice; it could hardly be called singing (3). Yet, though the severe mind of Athanasius might disdain such subsidiaries, the power of music was felt to be a dangerous antagonist in the great religious contest. Already the soft and effeminate singing introduced by Paul of Samosata, had estranged the hearts of many worshippers, and his peculiar doctrines had stolen into the soul, which had been melted by the artificial melodies, introduced by him into the service. The Gnostic hymns of Bardesanes and Valentinus (4), no doubt, had their musical accompaniment. Arius himself had composed hymns which were sung to popular airs; and the streets of Constantinople, even to the time of Chrysostom, echoed at night to those seductive strains which denied or imperfectly expressed the Trinitarian doctrines. Chrysostom arrayed a band of orthodox choristers, who hymned the coequal Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Donatists in Africa adapted their enthusiastic hymns to wild and passionate melodies, which tended to keep up and inflame, as it were, with the sound of the trumpet, the fanaticism of their followers (5).

The first change in the manner of singing was the substitution of singers (6), who became a separate order in the Church, for the mingled voices of all ranks, ages, and sexes which was compared by the great reformer of church music to the glad sound of many waters (7).

(1) Alleluia novis balat ovile choris.

Paulin. Epist. ad Sev. 12.  
Curvorum hinc chorus helciariorum,  
Responsantibus Alleluia ripis,  
Ad Christum levat amicum celestium.

Sid. Apoll. lib. ii. ep. 10.

(2) Absque eo qui dicturus in medium Psalmos surrexerit, cuncti sedilibus humillimis insidentes, ad vocem psallentis omni cordis intentione dependent. Cassian. Instit. ii. 12. Compare Euseb. H. E. ii. 17. Apostol. Constit. xx. 57.

(3) Tam modico flexu vocis faciebat sonare lectorem Psalmi, ut pronuncianti vicinior esset quam canenti. August. Confess. x. 33.

(4) Tertull. de Carn. Christi, 17.

(5) Donatistæ nos reprehendunt, quod sobrie psallimus in ecclesiâ divina cantica Prophetarum, cum ipsi ebrietates suas ad canticum psalmodiarum humano ingenio compositorum, quasi tubas exhortationis inflammant. Augustin. Confess.

(6) Compare Bingham. The leaders were called ὑποχοροί.

(7) Responsoriis psalmodiarum, cantu mulierum, virginum, parvularum co-somans undarum fragor resultat. Ambros. Hexam. l. iii. c. 5.



The antiphonal singing, in which the different sides of the choir answered to each other in responsive verses, was first introduced at Antioch by Flavianus and Diodorus. Though, from the form of some of the psalms, it is not improbable that this system of alternate chanting may have prevailed in the Temple service, yet the place and the period of its appearance in the Christian Church seems to indicate a different source. The strong resemblance which it bears to the chorus of the Greek tragedy, might induce a suspicion, that as it borrowed its simple primitive music from Judaism, it may, in turn, have despoiled Paganism of some of its lofty religious harmonies.

This antiphonal chanting was introduced into the West (1) by Ambrose, and if it inspired, or even fully accompanied the *Te Deum*, usually ascribed to that prelate, we cannot calculate too highly its effect upon the Christian mind. So beautiful was the music in the Ambrosian service, that the sensitive conscience of the young Augustine took alarm, lest, when he wept at the solemn music, he should be yielding to the luxury of sweet sounds, rather than imbibing the devotional spirit of the hymn (2). Though alive to the perilous pleasure, yet he inclined to the wisdom of awakening weaker minds to piety by this enchantment of their hearing. The Ambrosian chant, with its more simple and masculine tones, is still preserved in the Church of Milan; in the rest of Italy it was superseded by the richer Roman chant, which was introduced by the Pope, Gregory the Great (3).

(1) Augustin. Confess. ix. 7. 1. How indeed could it be rejected, when it had received the authority of a vision of the blessed Ignatius, who was said to have heard the angels singing in the antiphonal manner the praises of the Holy Trinity. Socr. H. E. vi. 8.

(2) Cum reminiscor lachrymas meas quas fudi ad cantus ecclesie tue, in primordiis recuperatae fidei mee, et nunc ipsum cum moveor, non cantu sed rebus quae cantantur, cum liquidâ voce et convenientissimâ modulatione cantantur: magnam instituti hujus utilitatem rursus agnosco. Ita fluctuo inter periculum voluptatis et experimentum salubritatis; magisque adducor, non quidem irretractabilem sententiam proferens cantandi consuetudinem approbare in ecclesiâ: ut per oblectamenta aurium, infirmior

animus in affectum pietatis assurgat. Augustin. Confess. x. 33. 3. Compare ix. 7. 2.

(3) The cathedral chanting of England has probably almost alone preserved the ancient antiphonal system, which has been discarded for a greater variety of instruments, and a more complicated system of music, in the Roman Catholic service. This, if I may presume to offer a judgment, has lost as much in solemnity and majesty as it has gained in richness and variety. Ce chant (le plain-chant) tel qu'il subsiste encore aujourd'hui est un reste bien défiguré, mais bien précieux, de l'ancienne musique qui, après avoir passé par la main des barbares, n'a pas perdu encore toutes ses premières beautés. Millin, Dictionnaire des Beaux-Arts.

## CHAPTER V.

## CONCLUSION.

THUS, then, Christianity had become the religion of the Roman world : it had not, indeed, confined its adventurous spirit of moral conquest within these limits ; yet it is in the Roman world that its more extensive and permanent influence, as well as its peculiar vicissitudes, can alone be followed out with distinctness and accuracy.

Paganism was slowly expiring ; the hostile edicts of the emperors, down to the final legislation of Justinian, did but accelerate its inevitable destiny. Its temples, where not destroyed, were perishing by neglect and peaceful decay, or, where their solid structures defied these less violent assailants, stood deserted and overgrown with weeds ; the unpaid priests ceased to offer, not only sacrifice, but prayer, and were gradually dying out as a separate order of men. Its philosophy lingered in a few cities of Greece, till the economy or the religion of the Eastern Emperor finally closed its schools.

The doom of the Roman empire was likewise sealed : the horizon on all sides was dark with overwhelming clouds ; and the internal energies of the empire, the military spirit, the wealth, the imperial power, had crumbled away. The external unity was dissolved ; the provinces were gradually severed from the main body ; the Western empire was rapidly sinking, and the Eastern falling into hopeless decrepitude. Yet though her external polity was dissolved, though her visible throne was prostrate upon the earth, Rome still ruled the mind of man, and her secret domination maintained its influence, until it assumed a new outward form. Rome survived in her laws, in her municipal institutions, and in that which lent a new sanctity and reverence to her laws, and gave strength by their alliance with its own peculiar polity to the municipal institutions—in her adopted religion. The empire of Christ succeeded to the empire of the Cæsars.

When it ascended the throne, assumed a supreme and universal dominion over mankind, became the legislator, not merely through public statutes, but in all the minute details of life, discharged, in fact, almost all the functions of civil as well as of religious government, Christianity could not but appear under a new form, and wear a far different appearance than when it was the humble and private faith of a few scattered individuals, or only spiritually connected communities. As it was about to enter into its next period of conflict with barbarism, and undergo the temptation of unlimited power, however it might depart from its primitive simplicity, and

indeed recede from its genuine spirit, it is impossible not to observe how wonderfully (those who contemplate human affairs with religious minds may assert how providentially) it adapted itself to its altered position, and the new part which it was to fulfil in the history of man. We have already traced this gradual change in the formation of the powerful Hierarchy, in the development of Monasticism, the establishment of the splendid and imposing Ritual; we must turn our attention, before we close, to the new modification of the religion itself.

Its theology now appears wrought out into a regular, multifarious, and, as it were, legally established system.

It was the consummate excellence of Christianity, that it blended in apparently indissoluble union religious and moral perfection. Its essential doctrine was, in its pure theory, inseparable from humane, virtuous, and charitable disposition. Piety to God, as he was impersonated in Christ, worked out, as it seemed, by spontaneous energy into Christian beneficence.

Christian  
theology  
of this  
period.

But there has always been a strong propensity to disturb this nice balance: the dogmatic part of religion, the province of faith, is constantly endeavouring to set itself apart, and to maintain a separate existence. Faith, in this limited sense, aspires to be religion. This, in general, takes place soon after the first outburst, the strong impulse of new and absorbing religious emotions. At a later period morality attempts to stand alone, without the sanction or support of religious faith. One half of Christianity is thus perpetually striving to pass for the whole, and to absorb all the attention, to the neglect, to the disparagement, at length to a total separation from its heaven-appointed consort. The multiplication and subtle refinement of theologic dogmas, the engrossing interest excited by some dominant tenet, especially if they are associated with, or embodied in, a minute and rigorous ceremonial, tend to satisfy and lull the mind into complacent acquiescence in its own religious completeness. But directly religion began to consider itself something apart, something exclusively dogmatic or exclusively ceremonial, an acceptance of certain truths by the belief, or the discharge of certain ritual observances, the transition from separation to hostility was rapid and unimpeded (1). No sooner had Christianity divorced morality as its inseparable companion through life, than it formed an unlawful connection with any dominant passion; and the strange and unnatural union of Christian faith with ambition, avarice, cruelty, fraud, and, even licence, appeared in strong contrast with its primitive harmony of doctrine and inward disposition. Thus in a great degree, while the Roman world became Christian in outward worship and in faith, it remained Heathen, or even at some periods

Separation  
of Christian  
faith  
and Christian  
morals

(1) Compare p. 305, 306.



never  
complete.

worse than in the better times of Heathenism, as to beneficence, gentleness, purity, social virtue, humanity, and peace. This extreme view may appear to be justified by the general survey of Christian society. Yet, in fact, religion did not, except at the darkest periods, so completely insulate itself, or so entirely recede from its natural alliance with morality, though it admitted, at each of its periods, much which was irreconcilable with its pure and original spirit. Hence the mingled character of its social and political, as well as of its personal influences. The union of Christianity with monachism, with sacerdotal domination, with the military spirit, with the spiritual autocracy of the papacy, with the advancement at one time, at another with the repression, of the human mind, had each their darker and brighter side; and were in succession (however they departed from the primal and ideal perfection of Christianity) to a certain extent beneficial, because apparently almost necessary to the social and intellectual development of mankind at each particular juncture. So, for instance, military Christianity, which grew out of the inevitable incorporation of the force and energy of the barbarian conquerors with the sentiments and feelings of that age, and which finally produced chivalry, was, in fact, the substitution of inhumanity for Christian gentleness, of the love of glory for the love of peace. Yet was this indispensable to the preservation of Christianity in its contest with its new eastern antagonist. Unwarlike Christianity would have been trampled under foot, and have been in danger of total extermination, by triumphant Mohammedanism.

Christian  
feelings  
never  
extinct.

Yet even when its prevailing character thus stood in the most direct contrast with the spirit of the Gospel, it was not merely that the creed of Christianity in its primary articles was universally accepted, and a profound devotion filled the Christian mind, there was likewise a constant under-growth, as it were, of Christian feelings, and even of Christian virtues. Nothing could contrast more strangely, for instance, than St. Louis slaughtering Saracens and heretics with his remorseless sword, and the Saviour of mankind by the Lake of Galilee; yet, when this dominant spirit of the age did not preoccupy the whole soul, the self-denial, the purity, even the gentleness of such a heart bore still unanswerable testimony to the genuine influence of Christianity. Our illustration has carried us far beyond the boundaries of our history, but already the great characteristic distinction of later Christian history had begun to be developed, the severance of Christian faith from Christian love, the passionate attachment, the stern and remorseless maintenance of the Christian creed, without or with only a partial practice of Christian virtue, or even the predominance of a tone of mind, in some respects absolutely inconsistent with genuine Christianity. While the human mind, in general, became more rigid in exacting, and more

timid in departing from, the admitted doctrines of the church, the moral sense became more dull and obtuse to the purer and more evanescent beauty of Christian holiness. In truth it was so much more easy, in a dark and unreasoning age, to subscribe, or at least to render passive submission to, certain defined doctrines, than to work out those doctrines in their proper influences upon the life, that we deplore, rather than wonder at, this substitution of one half of the Christian religion for the whole. Nor are we astonished to find those, who were constantly violating the primary principles of Christianity, fiercely resenting, and, if they had the power, relentlessly avenging, any violation of the integrity of Christian faith. Heresy of opinion, we have seen, became almost the only crime, against which excommunication pointed its thunders : the darker and more baleful heresy of unchristian passions, which assumed the language of Christianity, was either too general to be detected, or at best encountered with feeble and impotent remonstrance. Thus Christianity became at the same time more peremptorily dogmatic, and less influential ; it assumed the supreme dominion over the mind, while it held but an imperfect and partial control over the passions and affections. The theology of the Gospel was the religion of the world ; the spirit of the Gospel very far from the ruling influence of mankind.

Yet even the theology maintained its dominion, by in some degree accommodating itself to the human mind. It became to a certain degree *mythic* in its character, and *polytheistic* in its form.

Now had commenced what may be called, neither unreasonably nor unwarrantably, the mythic age of Christianity. As Christianity worked downward into the lower classes of society, as it received the rude and ignorant barbarians within its pale, the general effect could not but be, that the age would drag down the religion to its level, rather than the religion elevate the age to its own lofty standard.

The connection between the world of man and a higher order of things had been re-established ; the approximation of the Godhead to the human race, the actual presence of the Incarnate Deity upon earth, was universally recognised ; transcendental truths, beyond the sphere of human reason, had become the primary and elemental principles of human belief. A strongly imaginative period was the necessary consequence of this extraordinary impulse. It was the reign of faith, of faith which saw or felt the divine, or at least supernatural, agency, in every occurrence of life, and in every impulse of the heart ; which offered itself as the fearless and undoubting interpreter of every event ; which comprehended in its domain the past, the present, and the future ; and seized upon the whole range of human thought and knowledge, upon history, and even natural philosophy, as its own patrimony.

Mythic  
age of  
Christian-  
ity.

Faith.

This was not, it could not be, that more sublime theology of a rational and intellectual Christianity ; that theology which expands itself as the system of the universe expands upon the mind ; and from its wider acquaintance with the wonderful provisions, the more manifest and all-provident forethought of the Deity, acknowledges with more awe-struck and admiring, yet not less fervent and grateful, homage the beneficence of the Creator ; that Christian theology which reverentially traces the benignant providence of God over the affairs of men—the all-ruling Father—the Redeemer revealed at the appointed time, and publishing the code of reconciliation, holiness, peace, and everlasting life—the Universal Spirit, with its mysterious and confest, but untraceable energy, pervading the kindred spiritual part of man. The Christian of these days lived in a supernatural world, or in a world under the constant and felt and discernible interference of supernatural power. God was not only present, but asserting his presence at every instant, not merely on signal occasions and for important purposes, but on the most insignificant acts and persons. The course of nature was beheld, not as one great uniform and majestic miracle, but as a succession of small, insulated, sometimes trivial, sometimes contradictory interpositions, often utterly inconsistent with the moral and Christian attributes of God. The divine power and goodness were not spreading abroad like a genial and equable sunlight, enlightening, cheering, vivifying, but breaking out in partial and visible flashes of influence ; each incident was a special miracle, the ordinary emotion of the heart was divine inspiration. Each individual had not merely his portion in the common diffusion of religious and moral knowledge or feeling, but looked for his peculiar and especial share in the divine blessing. His dreams came direct from heaven, a new system of Christian omens succeeded the old ; witchcraft merely invoked Beelzebub, or Satan instead of Hecate ; hallowed places only changed their tutelary nymph or genius for a saint or martyr.

Imagin-  
ative state  
of the hu-  
man mind.

It is not less unjust to stigmatise in the mass as fraud, or to condemn as the weakness of superstition, than it is to enforce as an essential part of Christianity, that which was the necessary development of this state of the human mind. The case was this,—the mind of man had before it a recent and wonderful revelation, in which it could not but acknowledge the divine interposition. God had been brought down, or had condescended to mingle himself with the affairs of men. But where should that faith, which could not but receive these high, and consolatory, and reasonable truths, set limits to the agency of this beneficent power? How should it discriminate between that which in its apparent discrepancy with the laws of nature (and of those laws how little was known!) was miraculous ; and that which, to more accurate observation, was only strange or wonderful, or perhaps the result of ordinary but



dimly seen causes? how still more in the mysterious world of the human mind, of which the laws are still, we will not say in their primitive, but in comparison with those of external nature, in profound obscurity? If the understanding of man was too much dazzled to see clearly even material objects; if just awakening from a deep trance, it beheld every thing floating before it in a mist of wonder, how much more was the mind disqualified to judge of its own emotions, of the origin, suggestion, and powers, of those thoughts and emotions, which still perplex and baffle our deepest metaphysics.

The irresistible current of man's thoughts and feelings ran all one way. It is difficult to calculate the effect of that extraordinary power or propensity of the mind to see what it expects to see, to colour with the preconceived hue of its own opinions and sentiments whatever presents itself before it. The contagion of emotions or of passions, which in vast assemblies may be resolved, perhaps, into a physical effect, acts, it should seem, in a more extensive manner; opinions and feelings appear to be propagated with a kind of epidemic force and rapidity. There were some, no doubt, who saw farther, but who either dared not, or did not care, to stand across the torrent of general feeling. But the mass, even of the strongest minded, were influenced, no doubt, by the profound religious dread of assuming that for an ordinary effect of nature, which *might be* a divine interposition. They were far more inclined to suspect reason of presumption than faith of credulity. Where faith is the height of virtue, and infidelity the depth of sin, tranquil investigation becomes criminal indifference, doubt guilty scepticism. Of all charges men shrink most sensitively, especially in a religious age, from that of irreligion, however made by the most ignorant or the most presumptuous. The clergy, the great agents in the maintenance and communication of this imaginative religious bias, the asserters of constant miracle in all its various forms, were themselves, no doubt, irresistibly carried away by the same tendency. It was treason against their order and their sacred duty, to arrest, or to deaden, whatever might tend to religious impression. Pledged by obligation, by feeling, we may add by interest, to advance religion, most were blind to, all closed their eyes against, the remote consequences of folly and superstition. A clergyman who, in a credulous or enthusiastic age, dares to be rationally pious, is a phenomenon of moral courage. From this time, either the charge of irreligion, or the not less dreadful and fatal suspicion of heresy or magic, was the penalty to be paid for the glorious privilege of superiority to the age in which the man lived, or of the attainment to a higher and more reasonable theology.

The  
clergy.

The desire of producing religious impression was in a great degree the fertile parent of all the wild inventions which already began to be grafted on the simple creed of Christianity. That which

Religious  
impressions.

was employed avowedly with this end in one generation, became the popular belief of the next. The full growth of all this religious poetry (for, though not in form, it was poetical in its essence) belongs to, and must be reserved for, a later period : Christian history would be incomplete without that of Christian popular superstition.

But though religion, and religion in this peculiar form, had thus swallowed up all other pursuits and sentiments, it cannot indeed be said, that this new mythic or imaginative period of the world suppressed the development of any strong intellectual energy, or arrested the progress of real knowledge and improvement. This, even if commenced, must have yielded to the devastating inroads of barbarism. But in truth, however high in some respects the civilisation of the Roman empire under the Antonines ; however the useful, more especially the mechanical, arts must have attained, as their gigantic remains still prove, a high perfection, (though degenerate in point of taste, by the colossal solidity of their structure, the vast buildings, the roads, the aqueducts, the bridges, in every quarter of the world, bear testimony to the science as well as to the public spirit of the age,) still there is a remarkable dearth, at this flourishing period, of great names in science and philosophy, as well as in literature (1).

Principles may have been admitted, and may have begun to take firm root, through the authoritative writings of the Christian fathers, which, after a long period, would prove adverse to the free development of natural, moral, and intellectual philosophy ; and having been enshrined for centuries as a part of religious doctrine, would not easily surrender their claims to divine authority, or be deposed from their established supremacy. The church condemned Galileo on the authority of the fathers as much as of the sacred writings, at least on their irrefragable interpretation of the scriptures ; and the denial of the antipodes by St. Augustine was alleged against the magnificent, but as it appeared to many no less impious than frantic, theory of Columbus (2). The wild cosmogonical theories of the Gnostics and Manicheans, with the no less unsatisfactory hypotheses of the Greeks, tended, no doubt, to throw discredit on all kinds of physical study (3), and to establish the strictly literal exposition of the Mosaic history of the creation. The orthodox fathers,

(1) Galen, as writer on physic, may be quoted as an exception.

(2) It has been said, that the best mathematical science which the age could command was employed in the settlement of the question about Easter, decided at the Council of Nice.

(3) Brucker's observations on the physical knowledge, or rather on the professed contempt of physical knowledge, of the fathers, are characterised with his usual plain good sense. Their general language was that of Lactantius : — "Quanto faceret sapientius ac verius si exceptione factâ diceret causas rationesque dun-

taxat rerum cœlestium seu naturalium, quia sunt abdite, nesciri posse, quia nullus doceat, nec quæri oportere, quia inveniri quærenda non possunt. Qua exceptione interposita et physicos admonuisset ne quærent ea, quæ modum excederent cogitationis humane, et se ipsum calumnie invidiâ liberasset, et nobis certe dedisset aliquid, quod sequeremur." Div. Instit. iii. 2. See other quotations to the same effect : Brucker, Hist. Phil. iii. p. 357. The work of Cosmas Indicopleustes, edited by Montfaucon, is a curious example of the prevailing notions of physical science.

when they enlarge on the works of the six days, though they allow themselves largely in allegorical inference, have in general in view these strange theories, and refuse to depart from the strict letter of the history (1); and the popular language, which was necessarily employed with regard to the earth and the movements of the heavenly bodies, became established as literal and immutable truth. The Bible, and the Bible interpreted by the fathers, became the code not of religion only, but of every branch of knowledge. If religion demanded the assent to a heaven-revealed, or heaven-sanctioned, theory of the physical creation, the whole history of man, from its commencement to its close, seemed to be established in still more distinct and explicit terms. Nothing was allowed for figurative or Oriental phraseology, nothing for that condescension to the dominant sentiments and state of knowledge, which may have been necessary to render each part of the sacred writings intelligible to that age in which it was composed. And if the origin of man was thus clearly revealed, the close of his history was still supposed, however each generation passed away undisturbed, to be still imminent and immediate. The day of judgment was before the eyes of the Christian, either instant, or at a very brief interval; it was not unusual, on a general view, to discern the signs of the old age and decrepitude of the world; and every great calamity was either the sign or the commencement of the awful consummation. Gregory I. beheld in the horrors of the Lombard invasion the visible approach of the last day; and it is not impossible that the doctrine of a purgatorial state was strengthened by this prevalent notion, which interposed only a limited space between the death of the individual and the final judgment (2).

But the popular belief was not merely a theology in its higher sense.

Christianity began to approach to a polytheistic form, or at least to permit, what it is difficult to call by any other name than polytheistic, habits and feelings of devotion. It attributed, however vaguely, to subordinate beings some of the inalienable powers and attributes of divinity. Under the whole of this form lay the sum of Christian doctrine; but that which was constantly presented to the minds of men was the host of subordinate, indeed, but still active and influential, mediators between the Deity and the world of man. Throughout (as has already been and will presently be indicated again) existed the vital and essential difference between Christianity

Poly-  
theistic  
form of  
Christi-  
anity.

(1) Compare the *Hexaemeron* of Ambrose, and Brucker's sensible remarks on the pardonable errors of that great prelate. The evil was, not that the fathers fell into extraordinary errors on subjects of which they were ignorant, but that their errors were canonised by the blind veneration of later ages, which might have been better informed.

(2) *Depopulatæ urbes, eversa castra, concre-*

*matæ ecclesiæ, destructa sunt monasteria viro-  
rum et fœminarum, desolata ab hominibus præ-  
dia, atque ab omni cultore destituta; in solitu-  
dine vacat terra, occupaverunt bestię loca, quæ  
prius multitudo hominum tenebat. Nam in hæc  
terrâ, in quâ nos vivimus, finem suum mandus  
jam non nuntiat sed ostendit.* Greg. Mag. Dial.  
iii. 38.



and Paganism. It is possible that the controversies about the Trinity and the divine nature of Christ, tended indirectly to the promotion of this worship, of the Virgin, of angels, of saints and martyrs. The great object of the victorious, to a certain extent, of both parties, was the closest approximation, in one sense, the identification, of the Saviour with the unseen and incomprehensible Deity. Though the human nature of Christ was as strenuously asserted in theory, it was not dwelt upon with the same earnestness and constancy as his divine. To magnify, to purify this from all earthly leaven was the object of all eloquence: theologic disputes on this point withdrew or diverted the attention from the life of Christ as simply related in the Gospels. Christ became the object of a remoter, a more awful, adoration. The mind began therefore to seek out, or eagerly to seize, some other more material beings, in closer alliance with human sympathies. The constant propensity of man to humanise his Deity, checked, as it were, by the receding majesty of the Saviour, readily clung with its devotion to humbler objects (1). The weak wing of the common and unenlightened mind could not soar to the unapproachable light in which Christ dwelt with the Father; it dropped to the earth, and bowed itself down before some less mysterious and infinite object of veneration. In theory it was always a different and inferior kind of worship; but the feelings, especially impassioned devotion, know no logic: they pause not; it would chill them to death if they were to pause for these fine and subtle distinctions. The gentle ascent by which admiration, reverence, gratitude, and love, swelled up to awe, to veneration, to worship, both as regards the feelings of the individual and the general sentiment, was imperceptible. Men passed from rational respect for the remains of the dead (2), the communion of holy thought and emotion, which might connect the departed saint with his brethren in the flesh, to the superstitious veneration of relics, and the deification of mortal men, by so easy a transition, that they never discovered the precise point at which they transgressed the unmarked and unwatched boundary.

This new polytheising Christianity therefore was still subordinate and subsidiary in the theologic creed to the true Christian worship, but it usurped its place in the heart, and rivalled it in the daily

Worship  
of saints  
and an-  
gels.

(1) The progress of the worship of saints and angels has been fairly and impartially traced by Shroëck, *Christliche Kirchengeschichte*, viii. 161. *et seq.* In the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, it is said, "we love the martyrs as disciples and followers of the Lord." The fathers of the next period leave the saints and martyrs in a kind of intermediate state, the bosom of Abraham or Paradise, as explained by Tertullian, *contr. Marc.* iv. 34 *Apolyct.* 47. Compare Irenæus, *adv. Hær.* v. c. 31. Justin, *Dial. cum Tryph.* Origen, *Hom.* vii. in *Levit.*

(2) The growth of the worship of relics is best shown by the prohibitory law of Theodosius

(A. D. 386.) against the removal and sale of saints' bodies. "Nemo martyres distrahat, nemo mercetur." *Cod. Theodos.* ix. 17. Augustine denies that worship was ever offered to apostles or saints. "Quis autem audivit aliquando fidei lium stantem sacerdotem ad altare etiam super sanctum corpus martyris ad Dei honorem cultumque constructum, dicere in precibus, offero tibi sacrificium, Petre, vel Pauli, vel Cypriane, cum apud eorum memorias offeratur Deo qui eos et homines et martyres fecit, et sanctis suis angelis cælesti honore sociavit." *De Civ. Dei*, viii. 27. Compare xvii. 10, where he asserts miracles to be performed at their tombs.

language and practices of devotion. The worshipper felt and acknowledged his dependency, and looked for protection, or support, to these new intermediate beings, the intercessors with the great Intercessor. They were arrayed by the general belief in some of the attributes of the Deity,—ubiquity (1); the perpetual cognisance of the affairs of earth; they could hear the prayer (2); they could read the heart; they could control nature; they had a power, derivative indeed from a higher source, but still exercised according to their volition, over all the events of the world. Thus each city, and almost each individual, began to have his tutelar saint; the presence of some beatified being hovered over and halloved particular spots; and thus the strong influence of local and particular worships combined again with that great universal faith, of which the supreme Father was the sole object, and the universe the temple (3). Still, however, this new polytheism differed in its

(1) Massuet, in his preface to Irenæus, p. cxxxvi. has adduced some texts from the fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries on the ubiquity of the saints and the Virgin.

(2) Perhaps the earliest instances of these are in the eulogies of the eastern martyrs, by Easile Greg. Naz. and Greg. Nyssen. See especially the former on the Forty Martyrs. 'Ο θαλῆς-μένος, ἐπὶ τοὺς τεσσαράκοντα κατα-φύγει, ὁ εὐφραινόμενος, ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἀποτρέχει, ὁ μὲν ἵνα λύσιν εὖρη τῶν δυσχερῶν, ὁ δὲ ἵνα φυλαχθῇ αὐτῶ τὰ χρηστότερα· ἐνταῦθα γυνὴ εὐσεβὴς ὅτιερ πικρὰν ὑχλομένη καταλαμβάνει-ται, ἀποθνήσκοντι ἀνδρὶ τὸν ἐπαινοῦσαν αἰτουμένη, ἀρρωστοῦντι τὴν σατυρίαν. Oper. vol. ii. p. 155. These and similar passages in Greg. Nazianzen (Orat. in Basil.) and Gregory of Nyssa (in Theodor. Martyr.) may be rhetorical ornaments, but their ignorant and enthusiastic hearers would not make much allowance for the fervour of eloquence.

(3) An illustration of the new form assumed by Christian worship may be collected from the works of Paulinus, who, in eighteen poems, celebrates the nativity of St. Felix the tutelary saint of Nola. St. Felix is at least invested in the powers ascribed to the intermediate deities of antiquity. Pilgrims crowded from the whole of the south of Italy to the festival of St. Felix. Rome herself, though she possessed the altars of St. Peter and St. Paul, poured forth her myriads; the Capenian gate was choked, the Appian way was covered with the devout worshipper. Multi-

tudes came from beyond the sea. St. Felix is implored by his servants to remove the impediments to their pilgrimages from the hostility of men or adverse weather; to smooth the seas, and send propitious winds.\* There is constant reference, indeed, to Christ\*\*\* as the source of this power, yet the power is fully and explicitly assigned to the saint. He is the prevailing intercessor between the worshipper and Christ. But the vital distinctions between this paganising form of Christianity and Paganism itself is no less manifest in these poems. It is not merely as a tutelary deity in this life, that the saint is invoked; the future state of existence and the final judgment are constantly present to the thoughts of the worshipper. St. Felix is entreated after death to bear the souls of his worshippers into the bosom of the Redeemer, and to intercede for them at the last day\*\*\*\*.

These poems furnish altogether a curious picture of the times, and show how early Christian Italy began to become what it is. The pilgrims brought their votive offerings, curtains and hangings, embroidered with figures of animals, silver plates with inscriptions, candles of painted wax, pendent lamps, precious ointments, and dishes of venison and other meats for the banquet. The following characteristic circumstance must not be omitted. The magnificent plans of Paulinus for building the church of St. Felix were interfered with by two wooden cottages, which stood in a field before the front of the building. At midnight a fire broke out in these tenements. The affrighted bishop woke up in trembling apprehension lest the splendid "palace" of the saint should be enveloped in the

\* "Stipatam multis unam juvat uribus urbem  
Cernere, totque uno compulsu examina voto.  
Lucani coeunt populi, coit Appula pubes  
Et Calabri, et cuncti, quos adlustr astus utroque,  
Qui læva, et dextra Latium circumsonat unda.

Et qua his ternas Campania læta per urbes, etc.  
Ipsaque celestium sacris procerum monumentis  
Roma Petro Pauloque potens, rarscere gaudet  
Hujus honore diem, portaque ex ore Capenæ  
Millia profundens ad amicæ mania Nola  
Dimittit duodena decem per millia denso  
Agmine, confertis longe latet Appia turbis."

Carm. 131

\*\* "Da currere mollibus undis  
Et famulis famulos a puppi suggere ventos."

Carm. i.

\*\*\* "Sis bonus o felixque tuis, Dominumque potentem  
Exores."

Luceat placati munere Christi  
Post pelagi fluctus," etc.

\*\*\*\* "Positasque tuorum

Ante tuos vultus, animas vectare paterno  
Ne renuas gremio Domini fulgentis ad ora. \*\*\*  
Posce ovium grege nos statui, ut sententia summi  
Judicis, hoc quoque nos iterum tibi munere donet."

Carm. 131.

influence, as well as in its nature, from that of Paganism. It bore a constant reference to another state of existence. Though the office of the tutelary being was to avert and mitigate temporal suffering, yet it was still more so to awaken and keep alive the sentiments of the religious being. They were not merely the agents of the divine providential government on earth, but indissolubly connected with the hopes and fears of the future state of existence.

The most natural, most beautiful, and most universal, though perhaps the latest developed, of these new forms of Christianity, that which tended to the poetry of the religion, and acted as the conservator of art, particularly of painting, till at length it became the parent of that refined sense of the beautiful, that which was the inspiration of modern Italy, was the worship of the Virgin. Directly that Christian devotion expanded itself beyond its legitimate objects; as soon as prayers or hymns were addressed to any of those beings who had acquired sanctity from their connection or co-operation with the introduction of Christianity into the world; as soon as the apostles and martyrs had become hallowed in the general sentiment; as more especially the objects of the divine favour and of human gratitude, the virgin mother of the Saviour appeared to possess peculiar claims to the veneration of the Christian world. The worship of the Virgin, like most of the other tenets which grew out of Christianity, originated in the lively fancy and fervent temperament of the East, but was embraced with equal ardour, and retained with passionate constancy, in the West (1).

The higher importance assigned to the female sex by Christianity, than by any other form at least of Oriental religion, powerfully tended to the general adoption of the worship of the Virgin, while that worship reacted on the general estimation of the female sex. Women willingly deified (we cannot use another ade-

flames. He entered the church, armed with a piece of the wood of the true cross, and advanced towards the fire. The flames which had resisted all the water thrown upon them, retreated before the sacred wood; and in the morning every thing was found uninjured except these two devoted buildings. The bishop, without scruple, ascribes the fire to St. Felix:—

“Sed et hoc Felicis gratia nobis  
Munere consulit, quod præveniendo laborem  
Utilibus flammis, operum compendia nobis  
Præstitit.” Carm. x.

The peasant, who had dared to prefer his hotel, though the beloved dwelling of his youth, to the house of God or of his saint, seeing one of the buildings thus miraculously in flames, sets fire to the other.

“Et celeri peragit sua damna furore  
Dilectasque domos, et inanes planget amores.”

Some of the other miracles at the shrine of St. Felix border close on the comic.

(1) Irenæus, in whose works are found the earliest of those ardent expressions with regard to the Virgin, which afterwards kindled into

adoration, may, in this respect, be considered as Oriental. I allude to his parallel between Eve and the Virgin, in which he seems to assign a mediatorial character to the latter. Iren. iii. 33. v. 19.

The earlier fathers use expressions with regard to the Virgin altogether inconsistent with the reverence of later ages. Tertullian compares her unfavourably with Martha and Mary, and insinuates that she partook of the incredulity of the rest of her own family. “Mater aequè non demonstratur adhasisse illi, cum Martha et Maria aliae in commercio ejus frequentantur. Hoc denique in loco (St. Luc. viii. 20.) apparet incredulitas eorum cum in doceret viam vite,” etc. De Carne Christi, c. 7. There is a collection of quotations on this subject in Field on the Church, p. 264. *et seq.*

The Collyridians, who offered cakes to the Virgin, were rejected as heretics. Epiph. Har. lxxviii. lxxix.

The perpetual virginity of Mary was an object of controversy: as might be expected, it was maintained with unshaken confidence by Epiphanius, Ambrose, and Jerome.



quate expression) this perfect representative of their own sex, while the sex was elevated in general sentiment by the influence ascribed to their all-powerful patroness. The ideal of this sacred being was the blending of maternal tenderness with perfect purity—the two attributes of the female character which man, by his nature, seems to hold in the highest admiration and love; and this image constantly presented to the Christian mind, calling forth the gentler emotions, appealing to, and giving, as it were, the divine sanction to, domestic affections, could not be without its influence. It operated equally on the manners, the feelings, and in some respect on the inventive powers of Christianity. The gentleness of the Redeemer's character, the impersonation of the divine mercy in his whole beneficent life, had been in some degree darkened by the fierceness of polemic animosity. The religion had assumed a sternness and severity arising from the mutual and recriminatory condemnations. The opposite parties denounced eternal punishments against each other with such indiscriminate energy, that hell had become almost the leading and predominant image in the Christian dispensation. This advancing gloom was perpetually softened; this severity, allayed by the impulse of gentleness and purity, suggested by this new form of worship. It kept in motion that genial undercurrent of more humane feeling; it diverted and estranged the thought from this harassing strife to calmer and less exciting objects. The dismal and the terrible, which so constantly haunted the imagination, found no place during the contemplation of the Mother and the Child, which, when once it became enshrined in the heart, began to take a visible and external form (1). The image arose out of, and derived its sanctity from, the general feeling, which in its turn, especially when, at a later period, real art breathed life into it, strengthened the general feeling to an incalculable degree.

The wider and more general dissemination of the worship of the Virgin belongs to a later period in Christian history.

Thus under her new form was Christianity prepared to enter into the darkening period of European history—to fulfil her high office as the great conservative principle of religion, knowledge, humanity, and of the highest degree of civilisation of which the age was capable, during centuries of violence, of ignorance, and of barbarism.

(1) At a later period, indeed, even the Virgin became the goddess of war:—

Ἀεὶ γὰρ οἶδε τὴν φύσιν νικᾶν μόνη,  
Τόκῳ τὸ πρῶτον, καὶ μάχῃ τὸ δεύτερον.

Such are the verses of George of Pisidia, relating a victory over the Avars.



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## ERRATA.

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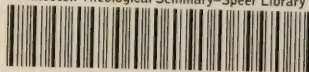






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